

STARS STRIPES®

Japan marks anniversary of Kobe earthquake

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Samuel L. Jackson plays it cool as 'Coach Carter'

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Picture of relief: Marine artist plays big role in aid mission

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Volume 63, No. 274 © SS 2005 J

TUESDAY, JANUARY 18, 2005

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Indonesia: No deadline for foreign troop exit

Defense minister says military on aid missions can stay past March 26 Page 4

Eagles spread wings, soar past Vikings



AP photos
Philadelphia running back Brian Westbrook celebrates after scoring a touchdown in the second quarter of Sunday's NFC divisional playoff game in Philadelphia.

Philly tops Minnesota 27-14, earns trip to fourth-straight NFC title game

Back page



Pittsburgh's Jeff Reed (3) and Chris Gardocki (17)

Steelers squeak by; Falcons roll

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Scene on Sunday

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Scene on Sunday

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News Tracker ... What's new with old news

Nation

Texas drug case: An undercover agent in a sting that sent dozens of black people in Tulsa, Texas, to prison on bogus drug charges was convicted of one of two perjury counts, and a jury recommended he serve probation.

Tom Coleman was acquitted Friday of testifying falsely in a 2003 hearing that as a sheriff's deputy he never stole gas from county pumps, but he was found guilty of saying that he did not learn about the theft charge against him until August 1998.

The judge ruled Tuesday on the length and terms of the sentence.

Pa. mine accident: A map of an abandoned mine that might have prevented a flood that trapped nine miners underground for 77 hours had been tucked away in a coal company closet and forgotten, a government report shows.

The nine-man team of miners working in the Quacreek, Pa., mine in July 2002 had an outdated map that didn't show the exact location of the adjacent Saxman mine, which was filled with millions of gallons of water.

Crews were eventually able to pull them out one-by-one in a dramatic rescue that made international headlines.

Cholesterol drugs: The U.S. government has until next month to decide whether to allow over-the-counter sales of a cholesterol drug — something an advisory panel says is a bad idea, at least for now.

The safety of Mevacor is well-established, but advisers worried the wrong people might take it if it sat on open drugstore shelves.

The panel voted 20-3 Friday to recommend against nonprescription sales that had been requested by a pair of drug companies.

S.C. train wreck: Thousands of residents evacuated from their Graniteville, S.C., homes after chlorine gas leaked from a train wreck more than a week ago were back in their homes Saturday, but hundreds more waited to return.

More than 4,000 of the 5,400 evacuated residents had returned to their homes by Saturday, officials said. Other residents' homes remained off-limits because they were closer to the chemical spill that killed nine people and injured 250 more on Jan. 6.

Evacuations began after a Norfolk Southern train slammed into a parked train, puncturing a tanker of chlorine gas.



Funeral for Mandela's son: Members of the Thembu royal house, right, and clergy from different denominations, left, attend the Saturday funeral of Makgatho Lewanika Mandela, the son of former South African President Nelson Mandela, in Qunu, Eastern Cape, South Africa. Makgatho Mandela died of AIDS-related complications. Among the 4,000 people who attended the funeral at the former president's Eastern Cape home were his former wife Winnie Madikizela-Mandela, South African President Thabo Mbeki and Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

World

USS Cole bombing: Hearings into a court appeal by the only people convicted in the 2000 USS Cole al-Qaida bombing ended Saturday and a judge said he will issue his verdict next month.

Four Yemenis were sentenced in September to prison sentences ranging from five to 10 years. Two men were sentenced to death.

The six were the first people convicted in the attack on the Cole, which killed 17 American sailors.

War crimes suspect: Bosnia's top international official on Sunday welcomed Bosnian Serb authorities' first-ever transfer of a war crimes suspect to the U.N. war crimes tribunal, saying he hoped others would soon follow.

Bosnia's top international administrator, Paddy Ashdown, applauded Saturday's arrest of Savo Todovic, 52, who is wanted for killings and beatings in a Serb-run prison in Foca, eastern Bosnia.

Ukraine election: In a sign of emerging cracks in the camp of presidential election winner Viktor Yushchenko, a top ally criticized his call on supporters to raze the downtown tent camp they've occupied for nearly two months, one of the most vivid symbols of Ukraine's "Orange Revolution."

Yulia Tymoshenko, a fiery orator and a

key driving force behind a wave of opposition protests, urged him to respect the residents of the tent camp.

Many of about 1,000 remaining residents of the camp defied Yushchenko's order to disperse and vowed to stay until his inauguration.

Nobel prize winner summoned: Nobel peace laureate Shirin Ebadi told Iran's hard-line Revolutionary Court on Saturday she won't obey a summons to appear, even if it means her arrest — an open challenge to a powerful body that has convicted many pro-reform intellectuals.

Ebadi, the first Iranian and Muslim woman to win the Nobel Peace Prize, vowed in an interview with The Associated Press to resist hard-line threats against her life.

The Revolutionary Court, which deals with security crimes, ordered Ebadi to appear for "some explanations" or face arrest.

Sudan peace agreement: President Omar el-Bashir vowed that the Sudanese army, which fought rebels in the south for more than 20 years, would now defend the peace agreement concluded earlier this month with those same rebels.

El-Bashir's government and the SPLA signed the peace treaty Jan. 9 to end Africa's longest war, which began in 1983 after southerners rebelled, seeking autonomy and control of their resources.

Stories and photos from The Associated Press

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Iraqis: Abuse sentence too lenient

By OMAR SINAN
The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — Word that a U.S. Army reservist was sentenced to 10 years behind bars for physically and sexually mistreating Iraqis at Abu Ghraib prison drew scorn Sunday from Iraqis who thought he should have been tried here and punished with death.

There was no official reaction from Iraq's interim government, but a handful of ordinary Iraqis interviewed here said the trial and its outcome brought no justice. Rather, it bore a humiliation just as potent as the shame that came when pictures of the abuse first emerged in April.

Abdul-Razak Abdul-Fattah, a 65-year-old retired army officer, said he was shocked to see television footage of U.S. Army Spc. Charles Graner Jr. leaving the court smiling and laughing even while his legs and hands were shackled.

"It showed on his face that he did not regret the shameful acts that he and his colleagues committed," he said. "Perhaps Americans think that those things, I mean showing people naked, is normal and not shameful."

Images of reservists abusing Iraqi detainees at Abu Ghraib caused widespread outrage throughout the Arab world in particular, where communities can shun people who've suffered such deeply personal and public disgrace.

Graner, 36, thought to be the ringleader of the abuse, was accused of stacking naked prisoners in a human pyramid and later ordering them to masturbate while other soldiers took photographs.

He also allegedly punched one man in the head hard enough to knock him out, and struck an injured prisoner with a collapsible metal stick.

He was sentenced Saturday in the first court-martial stemming from the scandal.

"Even though the Iraqi community knows that those abused people were forced to do so, the community will continue to look down on them," said Hussein Mohammed, a 22-year-old student.

A young shopkeeper in downtown Baghdad



Army Spc. Charles Graner Jr. is taken into custody in shackles Saturday after he was sentenced to 10 years in his court-martial at Fort Hood, Texas.

said Graner, and his cohorts should be executed in Iraq in front of those they abused.

"That person brought ignominy to those Iraqis. As Arabs, we prefer to die with honor rather than live with such disgrace," said 24-year-old Mohammed Ahmed.

A teacher in the northern city of Kirkuk said the abuse at the prison recalled the crimes committed by Saddam Hussein's re-

gime, and was perhaps more shocking because it was not expected from a country that preaches respect for human rights.

"Iraq was a cemetery for human rights violations. When Saddam created the mass graves we thought that it was a savage thing," Sardar Mohammed, 38, said. "But when we saw the Americans and what they have done at Abu Ghraib, I was astonished because America came here carrying slogans of freedom and democracy."

Under military court rules, Graner's case will be automatically appealed to the Army Court of Criminal Appeals. He also could request clemency from his commanding general.

Graner did not testify during his trial, but he took the witness stand during the sentencing phase Saturday to reject the defense claim that the jury clearly repeated: that he had been ordered by intelligence agents at Abu Ghraib to abuse the prisoners to make them easier to interrogate.

Defense lawyer Guy Womack asked why he was smiling in the infamous photos, some of which were shown while Graner spoke.

"I'm smiling now, and that's a nervous smile," Graner said. "There was a lot of things that we did that were so screwed up, if you didn't look at them as funny, there was no way to deal with it."

Graner described himself as a by-the-book prison guard corrupted by superiors who ordered him to physically mistreat and sexually humiliate detainees.

He said he initially resisted pressure to mistreat prisoners, but his Army superiors made it clear to him that he was expected to obey the commands of the military and civilian intelligence agents who ran his part of Abu Ghraib.

Graner said a lieutenant in his unit told him: "If [military intelligence] asks you to do this, it needs to be done. They're in charge, follow them."

He said he now knows that those orders were unlawful, but "at the time my understanding is that they were [lawful], or I wouldn't have done them," he said. "I don't regret what I did. ... A lot of it was wrong, a lot of it was criminal."

Navy Lodges slow to phase out smoking

By GREG TYLER
Stars and Stripes

SASEBO NAVAL BASE, Japan — Navy Lodge facilities worldwide have been phasing out smoking in guest rooms for several years, but they're still a bit behind the curve when it comes to banning smoking in military guest housing facilities.

As of March 1, guests at all Army lodging facilities will have to go outside to smoke; smoking was banned at Air Force guest rooms and common areas in 2001, according to the service.

"Every new and renovated Navy Lodge is a nonsmoking facility," said Michael Beckelman, Navy Lodge Program director. "All proposed new guest rooms, they will remain that way until which time the property is renovated."

Smoking is permitted on balconies and patios of individual rooms as well as designated areas outside of the hotel, he said.

The three Navy Lodges in Asia all are in Japan. Navy Lodges at Sasebo Naval Base, Atsugi Naval Air Facility and Yokosuka Naval Base have 58, 88 and 165 rooms respectively. At all three facilities, smoking or nonsmoking rooms can be requested but not guaranteed, according to the Navy Lodge Web site.

"We are currently renovating or getting ready to renovate Atsugi and Yokosuka. Once finished, they will be nonsmoking facilities," said Navy Exchange Service Command spokeswoman Kristine Sturkie.

"Navy Lodges have been going nonsmoking for a number of years," Beckelman said. "Navy Lodges worldwide all follow the same practices for the quality guest satisfaction."

In addition to the three lodges in Japan, NEXCOM operates five other Navy Lodges outside the United States including one each in Cuba, Iceland and Spain and two in Italy.

"The Navy Lodge Program is known for its consistency worldwide," Beckelman said. "Like (with) any good hotel company, the guest wants to know what to expect when they arrive."

A smoking ban ordered in 1997, through an executive order signed by President Clinton, affected smokers at U.S. military installations worldwide. The order, titled "Protecting Federal Employees and the Public From Exposure to Tobacco Smoke in the Federal Workplace," was to be phased in for all interior space owned, rented or leased by the government — except residential buildings.

In 2002, for instance, Morale, Welfare and Recreation facilities, the Navy Lodges are exempt from the mandatory no-smoking order.

As residential facilities, the Navy Lodges are exempt from the mandatory no-smoking order.

E-mail Greg Tyler at: tyler@strips.osd.mil

Satellite failure continues for AFN

Stars and Stripes

The signal from a satellite that helps deliver American Forces Network programming in the Pacific continued to go down Sunday, prompting the service to continue using an alternate broadcast schedule, according to the AFN Web site at www.afn.net.

The failure, which happened at 8:10 a.m. Saturday, affected all AFN radio, television and cable networks, the service said. AFN officials switched to a secondary satellite, which required AFN stations to broadcast different shows from those previously scheduled.

As of Sunday evening, no estimate was available for when primary service would be restored, according to the Web site.

Old charts may be partly to blame for submarine accident

By SIOBHAN McDONOUGH
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Outdated charts may have been partially at fault for the undersea grounding of a U.S. nuclear submarine last weekend, according to a U.S. agency that analyzes spy satellite imagery and produces maps and charts for the Defense Department.

Officials at the Bethesda, Maryland-based National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency said Saturday the main chart likely used by the USS San Francisco didn't reveal any obstacle anywhere near where the boat struck on the floor of the Pacific Ocean during underwater operations last Saturday about 350 miles south of Guam.

The closest notation on the map indicates discolored water about three miles from the accident site. The discolored water was reported by the Japanese most likely in the 1960s or even earlier, ac-

cording to David Burpee, the agency's spokesman.

The Defense Mapping Agency created the chart in 1989, and it was never revised. Burpee said a satellite photograph taken 10 years later could be read in hindsight to show an undersea mountain not on the chart, but that was not clear at the time and, in any case, the photo was just one among thousands of shots of ocean expanses that have not been fully charted using all the latest methods.

"The charts used today may not reflect the reality of what's actually on the ocean floor," said Burpee, adding that the charts used today were charted with earlier technology and may not be up-to-date.

"You think (the charts) are right until somebody tells you they're not," he said, adding that ships use sonar to pick up ocean forms and pass that information on to the agency.

The Navy has said an initial in-

vestigation into the accident found that the submarine struck a large rock, land or other natural feature and nothing else.

One sailor was killed and at least 25 suffered injuries including broken bones, cuts and bruises. The submarine has a crew of 137.

Burpee said the images taken of the area by a Lansat satellite in 1999 could be viewed upon close examination in the wake of the accident to indicate a submerged structure, such as a reef or a ridge, but also could have been read as showing variations in water color caused by dense growth of plankton or something dumped from a passing ship, such as oil.

The Francisco's nuclear reactor was undamaged, and the submarine made its way back to its home port in Guam under its own power. Its outer hull was damaged, but its inner hull remained intact.

The submarine had been headed to Australia for a port visit.

Indonesia says no deadline for foreign troops

BY MIKE CORDER
The Associated Press

JAKARTA, Indonesia — Indonesia increased its tsunami death toll by 5,000 Sunday, raising the overall number of people who died in the Dec. 26 disaster to more than 162,000. The nation's defense ministry toned down his country's reluctance to host foreign troops helping in relief efforts.

The additional deaths came from the village of Calang on the northwestern coast of Sumatra. The island has counted more than 115,000 dead, including those killed in the Indian Ocean earthquake that generated the killer waves. More than 12,000 people remained missing, according to Indonesia's Social Affairs Ministry.

The flow of relief supplies into northern Sumatra was expected to double with the opening of a second airport Sunday, as United Nations teams moved deeper into the interior to assess the plight of villagers who fled the coastline.

The damaged aircraft at Sabang Island, just off the northern tip of Sumatra, was back in operation with military C-130 transports from several nations scheduled to arrive in the coming days, U.S. Navy spokesman Lt. Cmdr. John Bernard said.

Nation retracts March 26 cutoff for military aiding tsunami victims, raises its death toll

A Japanese medical team arrived in Sumatra's Aceh province Sunday to prepare for their military's biggest overseas relief effort. Japan plans to send about 1,000 troops to Aceh this month for a three-month stay, said Col. Takeshi Morichi, commander of the military's medical corps.

The U.S. military already has 2,000 Marines ferrying aid workers and transporting food to victims in Aceh, where most of the devastation occurred. Overall, about 15,000 U.S. military personnel are involved in the relief effort in South Asia.

Hundreds of troops from Australia, Singapore, Germany and other nations also are helping the relief effort, along with U.N. agencies and scores of nongovernment aid groups.

Several Indonesian officials, including the vice president, have expressed unease about the large number of foreign troops, indicating their desire to see them leave by March 26. Security appeared to be a big part of the concern. Aceh is home to separatist rebels who have been fighting the central government for years.

But Indonesia's defense minister said Sunday there was no deadline for the troops to be out.

"We would like to emphasize that March 26 is not a deadline for involvement of foreign military personnel in the relief effort," Defense Minister Juwono Sudarsono said after meeting with U.S. Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz in Jakarta.

Wolfowitz, who also toured the disaster-hit Sumatran coast during his visit, has voiced pride in the American aid operation but said Washington wanted to hand over relief work to Indonesia and other affected nations as soon as possible.

In the meantime, he hinted he believes improving military links would help bolster democracy in Indonesia under President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono.

"We need to think about how we can strengthen this newly elected democratic government ... to help build the kind of defense institution that will ensure in the fu-

ture that the Indonesian military, like our military, is a loyal function of a democratic government," said Wolfowitz, a former U.S. ambassador to Jakarta.

In Sri Lanka, U.N. World Food Program chief James T. Morris met with the political chief of the Tamil Tiger rebels, S.P. Thamilselvan, to discuss distribution of food to 90,000 people in the rebel-controlled north. The government initially opposed Morris' visit.

"We are not involved in politics. We are involved in seeing that people are fed," said Morris, who earlier visited the badly hit southern port city of Galle.

Canada's Prime Minister Paul Martin was in Thailand, where he met members of a Canadian police forensic squad helping identify the dead in beach towns leveled by the killer waves.

"It's very emotional on the one hand, but on the other hand we must really recognize all those — Thai and Canadian — who have worked so hard here," he said.

The prime minister of Sweden, Norway and Finland arrived in Bangkok on Sunday to thank the nation and its people for helping care for thousands of Nordic tourists who were caught up in the turmoil.

Miranda Lefsting of The Associated Press contributed to this report in Phuket, Thailand.

A glance out the window



VAL GEMPIR/Courtesy of the U.S. Air Force

Senior Airman Matt Morrow, an HH-60 "Pave Hawk" helicopter senior gunner from the 33rd Rescue Squadron, Kadena Air Base, Okinawa, scans the Sri Lankan horizons during relief operations. His helicopter transported supplies and equipment to various relief distribution centers in Sri Lanka.

Several parents lay claim to baby in Sri Lankan hospital

BY TINI TRAN
The Associated Press

KALMUNAI, Sri Lanka — When the waves tore through her beachfront home, Jenita Jeyarajah grabbed her 3-month-old son and younger sister and climbed up a raised concrete slab. The force of the raging waters broke it, tearing her son from her arms as all three fell helplessly into the raging waters.

Jeyarajah and her family now believe her son Abhass survived the ordeal, but she no longer has the records to prove it. She is one of nine mothers laying claim to a baby brought into the hospital in the eastern coastal town of Kalmunai hours after the Dec. 26 tsunami struck.

The desperate struggle by grieving parents over the infant — dubbed "Baby 81" because he was the 81st admission that terrible day — is perhaps the most extreme example yet of the depths of a tragedy that has torn apart families, claiming the lives of some 12,000 children, about 40 percent of Sri Lanka's death toll of 31,000.

The fate of the baby, who doctors say is about three or four months old, now lies in the hands of the courts, and ultimately a DNA test to determine parentage, say hospital officials.


"Maybe the couples are not lying, but the only way to make sure 100 percent is to have a DNA test," said K. Muhunthan, consulting obstetrician at Kalmunai Base Hospital.

For the 25-year-old Jeyarajah, the battle to claim her son is another nightmare to deal with since the tsunami swept away all the birth records and family photographs that might have proved he was her son.

Dilip Ganguly of The Associated Press contributed to this report.



The infant dubbed "Baby 81" lies in a hospital bed Sunday in Kalmunai, Sri Lanka. Nine mothers have laid claim to the baby brought into the hospital after the Dec. 26 tsunami and the fate of the baby now lies in the hands of the courts, and ultimately a DNA test, say hospital officials.



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Creating a symbol of hope

Marine designs logo, important safety flyers for tsunami mission

BY JULIANA GITTNER

Stars and Stripes

UTAPAO, Thailand — For years to come, every time the logo for the U.S. military's post-tsunami relief work is flashed on a screen, Lance Cpl. Michael DeVoe Jr. can remember his role in the effort.

When it's completed, the image will appear in the background of every news conference and on the letterhead of every document about the massive historic mission.

"I'm excited for him," said his boss, Chief Warrant Officer Timothy LeMaster, officer in charge of the 3rd Marine Division Combat Camera in Okinawa. "The operation is going to go down in history and he gets to put an image to it."

DeVoe, a 20-year-old Marine Corps combat graphic illustrator, is creating the official logo for the Operation Unified Assistance, the military-led relief effort in Thailand, Indonesia, Sri Lanka and other areas affected by the Dec. 26 earthquake and tsunami.

He also created handbills Navy airmen used in Indonesia to keep people from rushing helicopters

and to help find injured people for medical evacuation.

DeVoe arrived in Thailand expecting to have not much to do. He started designing a logo on his own initiative.

He and LeMaster were pleased enough with his design, an image of a globe showing the region with flags from several countries, that they brought it to the command staff.

Mission commander Lt. Gen. Robert R. Blackman saw it and gave DeVoe the go-ahead to create the official design.

Blackman also gave him a new theme for the multinational mission: the various nations and nongovernmental organizations working together.

The final design has yet to be approved, but the current draft (shown above) retains the globe and includes symbols denoting peace and cooperation.

The design must keep cultural sensitivities in mind: A red cross on a box was removed when they realized it looked like a bible when printed in black and white.

"That's been the hardest part for him, trying to get a concept like that and make it work in an image," LeMaster said.

But just as he began designing the logo, DeVoe was faced with another important task.

Maj. Mike Lwin from Pacific Command information operations came to him after crowds began surging at helicopters distributing aid.

"Initially they were mobbing the helos," Lwin said.

He told DeVoe what he needed: a leaflet to convey, simply, the dangers of helicopters, telling people to wait for aid to be brought to them.

DeVoe created a simple, clear design.

"It's been effective," Lwin said.

After Indonesian soldiers began handing out the papers to crowds "they immediately moved back."

They next created a sheet that air crew members could use to ask crowds if anyone was injured and needed evacuation. The design shows a stretcher being carried to a helicopter and then on to a hospital.

It asks where the injured people are and offers three responses to which Indonesians can simply point, avoiding any language-difference barriers.

On a recent mission, aircrews evacuated 32 people as a result of using the paper. "His work is directly saving lives on a daily basis," Lwin said.

DeVoe is just recognizing that significance, he said, and that something he loves to do can help.

DeVoe said art came naturally to



JIM SCHULZ/Stars and Stripes

Lance Cpl. Michael DeVoe Jr. creates art for the massive, multinational disaster relief effort in the wake of the South Asia earthquake and tsunami.

him in high school. He graduated at the top of his art class and planned to continue his studies in college. But costs put that dream on hold. A recruiter at school turned him on to the unique military specialty of combat graphic illustrator.

"This is exactly what I wanted to do. Nobody can tell me otherwise: I've got the best job," he said. "I can pay for college this way."

For his first assignment, DeVoe landed on Okinawa and began doing unit logo designs.

"Within four months I started seeing my jobs all over the base," he said.

The logos were more than just designs, he realized. They were symbols of unit pride.

Now on his first deployment, DeVoe also is carrying on the com-

bat illustrator tradition of going into the field to document missions.

Illustrators, LeMaster said, can show events other media can't, for example, and show meaning through drawings that a split-second camera image can't convey.

"There's things illustrators can capture that other forms can't," LeMaster said. "People don't realize what these skills can bring to the table."

The magnitude of his work is starting to sink in, DeVoe admits: "I'll definitely have to write home about this."

E-mail Juliana Gittner at: gittnerj@stripes.osd.mil

Tsunami debris on islands creates disposal dilemma

BY NIRMALA GEORGE

The Associated Press

PORT BLAIR, India — Travel brochures for India's Andaman and Nicobar islands depict a tropical paradise of turquoise waters, coconut trees and miles of white, pristine beaches.

But last month's tsunami wrecked those beautiful coasts, smashing jetties and boats and turning thousands of homes and

buildings into heaps of rubble. Hundreds of coconut palms have been cut in half, shorn of their canopies, and splintered wood, twisted metal and concrete chunks litter the shorelines.

As the clean-up begins, a question is emerging: What to do with all the debris? Environmental activists are worried that government agencies and private contractors will simply dump it all into the sea — long a common

method of trash disposal here. That would cause enormous damage to the islands' marine life, mangroves and coral reefs, they warn.

"This would be the easiest option. But the damage of such indiscriminate dumping on the marine ecology would be huge," said Pankaj Sekhsaria of the environmental group Kalpvriksha, which has written to the islands' top official, demanding attention to ecological concerns.

Among other things, wholesale dumping would upset the habitat of the numerous ocean life forms and disrupt the intricate food chain, said Samita Acharya, a marine biologist and environmental activist.

While there is a landfill in the islands' capital, Port Blair, it's an

impossibly distant journey from most island villages. Also, the landfill juts into the ocean, so there is the danger of chemicals leaching into the water, said Acharya.

Yet another fallout — this one man-made — comes from the vast amounts of plastic from relief material piling up in relief camps in Port Blair. Most emergency food packets and drinking water all come in plastic containers, which are quickly accumulating on the islands.

Town employees have begun collecting plastic from relief shelters, but they have not decided what to do with it yet.

Kalpvriksha has suggested the plastic be collected and shipped back to mainland India for recycling.

Some of the debris, though, will be useful.

Many of the concrete chunks can be used to rebuild jetties damaged or destroyed by the tsunami, said P. Radhakrishnan, a top official at the Andaman harbor authority.

"We need a lot of material as filling while constructing new jetties and ramps for boats to land. The concrete rubble and chunks would serve this purpose," he said.

Work on clearing the debris also has slowed due to an acute shortage of labor, as many construction workers fled to mainland India, more than 745 miles away.

Some scientists see an opportunity in the situation, and have suggested that some of the larger concrete chunks be used to create breakwaters in the sea, away from natural coral reefs.

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Monthly

Mens Prayer Breakfast 1st Sat

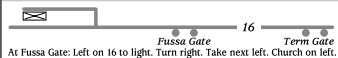
Ladies Meeting 1st Sat

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IN THE WORLD

Israeli forces to crack down on militants

PLO asks rebels to cease attacks

BY JOSEF FEDERMAN
The Associated Press

JERUSALEM — The Israeli military received a green light on Sunday for a tough crackdown on Palestinian militants, as the government dismissed a call by the PLO leadership for a halt to attacks on Israelis.

Prime Minister Ariel Sharon issued his directive to the army after a string of Palestinian rocket, mortar and bombing attacks in recent days, saying the Palestinian leadership has failed to take even minimal steps to prevent the violence.

The bloodshed has escalated tensions with the new Palestinian leader, Mahmoud Abbas, whose election last week had raised hopes for a breakthrough in Middle East peacemaking.

Palestinian officials accused Sharon of undermining Abbas' fledgling efforts to persuade militants to halt the violence.

After Sharon unleashed his military, the Palestinian Liberation Organization's Central Committee met to discuss the rising tensions, saying afterward that the militants were only hurting the Palestinian cause.

The powerful PLO body called on militants to "stop all the military action that might harm our national goals and give the Israelis an excuse to obstruct Palestinian authority," Abbas is the head of the committee.



A masked Palestinian gunman of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine sets a mock coffin with an Israeli flag on fire during an anti-Israel protest at Rafah refugee camp, southern Gaza Strip, on Sunday. The PLO Executive Committee on Sunday called on Palestinian militants to halt attacks against Israel.

The statement was the PLO's strongest language against violence since the death of longtime Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat on Nov. 11. It did not specify, however, what action might be taken against the militants.

Israeli officials brushed off the statement and said military preparations were continuing. A senior official, speaking on the condition of anonymity, repeated the Israeli stance that Abbas will be judged by his deeds, not his words.

Sharon cut off contacts with Abbas after Palestinian militants killed six Israelis at a Gaza Strip crossing into Israel on Thursday. The attack sparked Israeli reprisals that killed six Palestinians in Gaza on Saturday.

Sharon told the weekly meeting of his Cabinet that he has asked the army to do whatever it deems necessary to end the attacks.

Japan asks for halt in arms sales to east Asia

BY GAVIN RABINOWITZ
The Associated Press

JERUSALEM — The Japanese foreign minister on Sunday asked Israel to end weapons sales to Japan's neighbors, but said Japan wants to expand defense cooperation with Israel.

Foreign Minister Nobutaka Machimura is in the region for talks with both the Israelis and the Palestinians. Machimura said Japan wanted to play a greater role in the Middle East peace process.

Speaking at a news conference, Machimura said that in talks with his Israeli counterpart, Shimon Peres, he passed the request to end arms sales to east Asian countries.

Machimura said his government had recently made similar

requests to Russia and the European Union. He did not specify which countries Japan was concerned about.

In recent days Israel has been embroiled in a row with the United States over the sale of Israeli pilotless planes to China.

The Japanese minister said the talks with Shalom also focused on expanding cooperation between the two countries in counter-terror expertise and defense.

In December, Japan approved new defense guidelines that include the relaxation of an arms export ban to facilitate a missile security program it is researching with Washington.

In the guidelines, the Japanese government identified North Korea's nuclear weapons ambitions and China's modernization of its huge military as threats to Japan.

N. Korea denies having secret uranium project

BY SANG-HUN CHOE
The Associated Press

SEOUL — North Korea denied that it has a secret uranium enrichment program and accused Washington of double standards, a day after it indicated a nuclear dispute to rejoin six-nation nuclear disarmament talks.

Calling the United States a "nuclear criminal," North Korea's state-run newspaper Rodong Sinmun accused Washington on Saturday of "convinced at, patronizing and cooperating with the pro-American forces" in Israel, Japan and South Korea to develop nuclear arms.

"The U.S. accusation against the [North] over its nonexistent 'uranium enrichment issue' clearly proves that the U.S. policy of double standards assumes extremely partial and aggressive nature," the newspaper said.

Whether the communist North should allow inspections to verify if, as the United States claims, it is running a clandestine uranium enrichment program in addition to its plutonium-based weapons

facilities, is one of the thorniest issues in the stalled six-nation nuclear talks.

Since September, the United States, North and South Korea, China, Japan and Russia have struggled to arrange a new round of talks aimed at persuading the North to abandon its nuclear ambitions. No breakthroughs were made in three earlier rounds.

U.S. Republican Rep. Curt Weldon, who led a bipartisan congressional delegation to North Korea this past week, said on Friday that the North appeared willing to rejoin the six-party talks "in a matter of weeks."

North Korea said it told the six visiting American lawmakers that it "would opt for finding a final solution to all the outstanding issues between the two countries" and would "treat [the United States] as a friend unless the latter slanders the former's system and interferes in its internal affairs."

Such a gesture was highly unusual, as North Korean officials typically laid their rhetoric with harsh anti-American criticism.



People shout in downtown St. Petersburg, Russia's second-largest city, Sunday to protest a recently passed law that strips them of Soviet-era benefits. The protests, which spread to other cities across Russia's 11 time zones, were triggered by the Jan. 1 law that gave retirees, the disabled and war veterans cash stipends instead of benefits such as free public medicine and transportation.

Russia's elderly take to the streets to protest cutoff in welfare benefits

BY IRINA TITOVA
The Associated Press

ST. PETERSBURG, Russia — Pensioners and veterans angered over the cutoff of welfare benefits clogged streets and paralyzed traffic in St. Petersburg, hometown to President Vladimir Putin, for a second day Sunday and the street demonstrations spread to other Russian cities.

Top government officials sought to shift the blame by accusing regional leaders of botching the management of new social programs, under which benefits such as free medicine and public transportation were replaced by a monthly government stipend.

Although St. Petersburg authorities promised to restore some benefits after 10,000 people jammed the center of Russia's second-largest city on Saturday, demonstrators returned Sunday to rally on Nevsky Street, again snarling traffic in the center of the city.

"Hitler stole our childhood, and Putin stole our declining years," declared a banner held aloft by one of the aging protesters.

Others waved red flags, beat spoons against saucapans and chanted slogans calling for Putin to effect Jan. 1. The protests have spread to several cities across Russia's 11 time zones. Retirees were in the streets of Volga River-city of Samara for a fifth day Sunday, and a rally in the southern city of Stavropol drew up to 5,000 people.

Many of the elderly, already complaining they are treated like second-class citizens, consider the changes a final insult as they struggle to survive on meager pensions in inflationary and capitalist Russia. Those affected by the new program lived most of their lives under a cradle-to-grave welfare system until the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991.

"Prices keep rising, and now they have canceled our benefits," said Tsvetlana Sidorova, 70. "Putin and his government want us to lie down and wait for death to come."

Japan marks quake anniversary

More than 6,400 died when trembler hit the city of Kobe in 1995

BY JOSEPH COLEMAN

The Associated Press

KOBE, Japan — Cars and trucks speed over the once-toppled elevated highways, and the thousands of collapsed houses have long been rebuilt. The ravaged port now features convention centers and Ferris wheels. Downtown gleams with new buildings.

The Japanese city of Kobe on Monday marked the 10th anniversary of the 7.3-magnitude earthquake that ripped through its heart Jan. 17, 1995, killing 6,433 people.

While the city has been nearly completely rebuilt, emotional and economic scars remain. Polls show nearly half of Kobe residents feel their lives have not fully recovered from the quake, and the memorials sprinkled around Kobe testify to the looming importance of the disaster in the city's psyche.

The remembrance of the quake and its victims has been magnified by the tsunami disaster in the Indian Ocean. While the scope and human toll of the tsunami greatly outweighs what happened in Kobe, residents here say the recent tragedy has brought a flood of memories of their own pain.

"Of course, if you look at the news and see this type of natural disaster, it all comes back," said Tomonori Ishida, 68, as he visited a memorial to the victims beside Kobe city hall. "If I were younger, I would like to be a relief volunteer."

And in quake-prone Japan, disaster is always a possibility.

Government studies show a powerful tremor under densely populated Tokyo could double the human toll of Kobe, potentially killing more than 12,000 and destroying \$50,000 homes.

Kobe will be in the spotlight again on Tuesday, when it hosts a U.N. conference on disaster reduction, a long-planned event that has been rereleased in the wake of the Asian disaster to focus on the creation of a tsunami-warning system in southern Asia. The conference runs until Saturday.

Democratizing the national impact of the Kobe quake, Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko headed to the port city on Sunday to join in a series of commemorations. Government officials and thousands of others were also expected to attend ceremonies.

Ahead of the main events, high school students made 450 snow figures at a downtown park to symbolize victims on Sunday.

People came through the afternoon and evening to put candles before snow figures; many bowed in prayer, some wiping tears from their eyes.

Nearby, an aid group collected donations for victims of the tsunami and other recent natural disasters.

Monday was to start with a candlelight vigil at the time the quake hit, 5:46 a.m., with participants illuminating the date of the tremor: 1.17. The focus will then shift to the port area, where a memorial service will be held in the afternoon. Thousands were scheduled to join memorial walks along routes used to evacuate people and deliver relief after the quake.

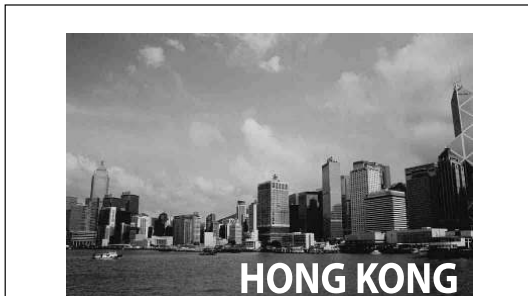
Over the long term, the quake accelerated urban Japan, such as the disappearance of mom-and-pop stores and downtown residential neighborhoods.

For some, the makeover of the city has been too complete, eclipsing the Kobe they once knew and erasing signs of the tragedy that struck here.

"If you don't come here, you wouldn't know there had been a quake," said Makiko Yamaguchi, 30, who was back in the city for a visit after moving to Okinawa. "The city looks lovely, but then that makes it easy to forget what happened."



A woman holds a candle Sunday in Itami, Japan, before offering a prayer for the more than 6,400 victims of the 1995 earthquake in the nearby port city of Kobe as Japanese mark the 10-year anniversary of the deadly quake.



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Security raised at Saudi holy sites for pilgrimage

The Associated Press

MINA, Saudi Arabia — The Interior Ministry has mobilized more than 50,000 forces to prepare for the annual hajj, officials said Saturday, but they warned that terrorists may still be able to launch attacks.

The forces will safeguard Saudi's holiest Islamic sites for an estimated 2 million Muslims who are expected to perform the pilgrimage to Mecca, a once-in-a-lifetime duty of all able-bodied Muslims who can afford it to cleanse the soul and wipe away sin.

Meanwhile, pilgrims streaming into Islam's holy city for the hajj, prayed for the more than 157,000 people killed in last month's tsunami and earthquake that devastated south Asia, asking God to give survivors the courage to cope.

The tragedy weighed heavy as the spiritual journey geared up.

Indonesia — the world's most populous Muslim nation with 220 million people — was hit hardest by the natural disaster, but 200,000 Indonesians, the country's quota, still were expected in Mecca.

Security was high throughout Mecca, where Saudi officials try to prevent stampedes or other accidents as well as watch for possible terror attacks. At checkpoints several miles outside the holy city, officers stopped cars randomly, peering into trunks, looking for explosives and checking IDs.

Interior Ministry spokesman Brig. Gen. Mansour al-Turki said the kingdom, which has been on high alert since a series of attacks targeted Saudi security forces and foreign interests, was ready for the hajj and predicted it would go smoothly, despite lingering terrorism fears.

Mom gives birth at 67

BUCHAREST, Romania — A 67-year-old Romanian woman gave birth Sunday to a baby girl, hospital officials said. The child's twin sister was stillborn, they said.

Romanian doctors at the Giulesti Maternity Hospital in Bucharest said Adriana Ilescu is the world's oldest recorded mother.

The child's daughter was delivered by Caesarean section early Sunday, more than six weeks short of a full 40-week pregnancy term, said a hospital spokeswoman. She weighed just 3.19 pounds and was in the intensive care unit but breathing on her own.

Gunbattle in Kuwait

UMM AL-HAIMAN, Kuwait — Police and militants fought a gunbattle in a small Kuwaiti town near a U.S. military logistics center Saturday, leaving one Saudi gunman dead and two policemen wounded, the Interior Ministry said.

The shootout began Saturday afternoon in Umm al-Haiman, on the outskirts of Kuwait City. A U.S. military logistics center is in the neighboring town of Arifan, but the base was not believed to have been the target of the gunmen, described by Kuwait officials as "terrorists."

From The Associated Press

U.S. forces launch raids in northern Iraq

Troops work to secure Mosul amid unease about upcoming elections

BY SALLY BUZBEE

The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — U.S. troops staged a series of raids in Mosul and elsewhere in northern and central Iraq on Sunday, arresting dozens, while insurgents stepped

up their attacks two weeks ahead of national elections, ambushing a car carrying a prominent female candidate and killing 17 people in one assault.

Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz conceded that U.S. and Iraqi forces cannot stop "extraordinary" intimidation by insurgents before the Jan. 30 vote.

Underlining the precarious security situation, Salama al-Khafaji, who was ambushed in central Baghdad by gunmen wearing police uniforms, but she escaped injury when her bodyguards returned fire, an aide said. It was the second attempt since May on the life of al-Khafaji, who is running on the favored slate endorsed by the country's main Shiite cleric, Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani.

U.S. and Iraqi officials have insisted that the elections go ahead as scheduled, despite the persistent violence.

Interim President Ghazi al-Yawer said that if the elections were postponed for six months, there would be no guarantee the violence would wane. The insurgents "might lay down for two or three months, then carry out attacks again," he said.

Most of the violence occurred around Kut, southeast of Baghdad, and the northern city of Mosul, Iraq's third-largest city.

Near Kut, three Iraqi policemen were killed in one shooting and three Iraqi National Guard officers were killed by a hand grenade in another attack. As mourners gathered for the policemen's funeral, a suicide attacker blew himself up in the crowd, killing himself and seven others.

Gunmen also shot dead an Iraqi translator for a Filipino company working on water projects for multinational forces near Kut, a medical official said.

In Mosul, insurgents shot dead a member of a local government council. They also set off explosives as a U.S. convoy passed, damaging a Bradley Fighting Vehicle, but no casualties were immediately reported.

A mortar also damaged a school in Mosul to be used as a



U.S. Army 1st Battalion, 24th Infantry soldiers search cars around an auto repair shop Sunday in Mosul, Iraq, in an area plagued by car bombs and other insurgent attacks. The Mosul area has emerged as a major flashpoint, raising fears that the upcoming election cannot be held in much of the city, Iraq's third largest.

polling place. And four other mortar rounds blasted schools in relatively quiet Baqra, in the south, also slated to serve as polling centers.

Even in heavily Shiite areas of south-central Iraq, which is far more stable than Mosul or Baghdad, several election workers have been threatened and resigned in recent days, a senior U.S. Embassy official said Sunday in Hillah while outlining election

preparations there.

"Most expect a high turnout if things seem quiet enough. There is some worry if you have a series of car bombs, people will think twice about coming," the official said.

Elsewhere in central Baghdad, insurgents attacked an Iraqi National Guard patrol on the east side of the city, then melted into the crowd in the open market area, sending shoppers run-

ning. Sounds of heavy machine-gun and automatic weapons fire reverberated for nearly an hour along Haifa street on the western side of the river.

Wolfowitz, speaking in Jakarta, Indonesia, acknowledged that the security threat was worse than in last October's nationwide balloting in Afghanistan and that it was impossible to guarantee "absolute security" against the "extraordinary" intimidation that the enemy is undertaking.

U.S. deaths in Iraq

The Associated Press

As of Saturday, at least 1,362 members of the U.S. military have died since the beginning of the Iraq war in March 2003, according to an Associated Press count. At least 1,071 died as a result of hostile action, the Defense Department said.

The figures include three military civilians.

The AP count is four higher than the Defense Department's tally, last updated at 10 a.m. Friday.

The British military has reported 76 deaths; Italy, 19; Poland, 16; Ukraine, 16; Spain, 11; Bulgaria, seven; Slovakia, three; Estonia, Thailand and the Netherlands, two each; and Denmark, El Salvador, Hungary, Latvia and Kazakhstan one death each.

Since May 1, 2003, when President Bush declared that major combat operations in Iraq had ended, 1,224 U.S. military members have died, according to AP's count. That includes at least 962 deaths resulting from hostile action, according to the military's numbers.

The latest deaths reported by the military:

■ A Marine was killed in action Saturday in Babil province.

■ A Marine assigned to the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force was killed Friday in a nonhostile accident in Anbar province.

The latest identifications reported by military:

■ No identifications reported.

Iraqi air force reactivated

BAGHDAD — One of the Iraqi air force's defunct transport squadrons formally reactivated Sunday after receiving a delivery of three C-130E Hercules cargo planes from the United States, the U.S. military said.

Iraqi airmen celebrated the arrival of the planes by slaughtering five sheep in a ceremony at an airfield and marked the planes with blood.

About 65 air force personnel will receive instruction in flying and maintaining the aircraft from U.S. Air Force commanders in Iraq and on flight simulators in the United States.

Babylon unharmed, Polish troops stay

WARSAW, Poland — A Polish official on Sunday dismissed charges by the British Museum that multinational troops damaged the ancient Iraqi city of Babylon, saying soldiers took the utmost care to preserve archaeological sites after setting up camp.

Polish troops in Babylon were accompanied by archaeologists, and Iraqi authorities responsible for the preservation of monuments were consulted on all work done at the military camp in the city, Defense Ministry spokesman Col. Piotr Pertek was quoted as saying.

From wire reports

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Oil to flow again through damaged pipeline

The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — Almost a month after saboteurs shut down a northern Iraqi oil pipeline, the government said Sunday it should resume pumping crude from northern fields to an export terminal in southeastern Turkey by month's end.

A Dec. 18 explosion caused by saboteurs halted the flow of oil through the northern pipeline, which was carrying about 400,000 barrels a day before the attack.

"Repair work on the damaged export pipeline that carries crude oil from Kirkuk

"Exports via the pipeline to Turkey's Ceyhan port are expected to resume immediately after completing repair work."

Oil Ministry statement

oil fields to the Turkish port of Ceyhan is expected to finish in 10 days time from now," the Oil Ministry statement said. "Exports via the pipeline to Turkey's Ceyhan port are expected to resume immediately after completing repair work."

The statement also said a damaged feed-

er pipeline that carries crude oil from Kirkuk oil fields to the Beji refinery, in northern Iraq, has been repaired and has started resupplying the refinery with 300,000 barrels a day.

Iraq's northern pipeline has been the target of repeated insurgent attacks, and the

storage facilities at Ceyhan, Turkey, ran dry last month.

Iraq's State Oil Marketing Organization last week informed customers it would reduce southern term export contracts by about 10 percent, or 160,000-170,000 barrels a day, for five months due to insurgent attacks, bad weather hampering the southern export terminals' operations and demurrage costs.

The organization's chief, Dhia al-Bakka, said last month that exports averaged 1.55 million barrels a day in 2004, with 1.43 million barrels coming from the south and 120,000 from the north.

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80 Afghan prisoners released by the U.S.

BY STEPHEN GRAHAM
The Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan — The U.S. military on Sunday freed about 80 prisoners held in Afghanistan, and the country's most senior judge said the government was negotiating for the release of hundreds more Afghans from American custody.

In a move which could help a reconciliation drive with former Taliban, two buses brought the 80 Afghan men from the main U.S. base at Bagram to the Supreme Court in the capital, Kabul, where they were received by the chief justice.

Fazl Hadi Shinwari congratulated them on their freedom and told them to be grateful to return to their families for the Muslim feast of Eid al-Adha, which begins Thursday.

"Don't sabotage the security or the government and God will be pleased with you," the white-bearded cleric told the men, seated in a hall at the court before they were allowed to complete their journeys home.

An aide to president Hamid Karzai, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the prisoners had been held either at Bagram, at a U.S. base in the southeastern city of Khost or at Kandahar in the south. Court officials initially announced that the men were from the U.S. jail at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, but later said they were mistaken.

American and allied Afghan forces captured thousands of suspected Taliban and al-Qaida members during and since the bombing campaign which ousted the repressive Taliban government in late 2001.

Hundreds have been classified as "enemy combatants" and transferred to the prison at the U.S. naval base at Guantanamo, while many others have been held at American bases in Afghanistan.

The U.S. military has suggested it is minimizing detentions and that a reconciliation program to be organized by Karzai's government could reduce the numbers further.

IN THE STATES

Bush says election win ratifies his Iraq policy

BY JIM VANDEHEI
AND MICHAEL A. FLETCHER
The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — President Bush said the public's decision to re-elect him was a ratification of his approach toward Iraq and that there was no reason to hold any administration officials accountable for mistakes or misjudgments in prewar planning or managing the violent aftermath.

"We had an accountability moment, and that's called the 2004 elections," Bush said in an interview with The Washington Post. "The American people listened to different assessments made about what was taking place in Iraq, and they looked at the two candidates and chose me."

With the Iraq elections two weeks away and no signs of the deadly insurgency abating, Bush set no timetable for the deployment of U.S. troops and twice declined to endorse Secretary of State Colin Powell's recent statement that the number of Americans serving in Iraq could be reduced by year's end. Bush said he will not ask Congress to expand the size of the National Guard or regular Army, as some lawmakers and military experts propose.

In a wide-ranging, 35-minute interview aboard Air Force One on Friday, Bush also laid out new details of his second-term plans for both foreign and domestic policy. For the first time, Bush said he will not press senators to pass a Constitutional amendment banning gay marriage, the top priority for many social conservative groups. And he said he has no plans to cut benefits for the roughly 40 percent of Social Security recipients who collect monthly disability and survivors payments as he prepares his plan for partial privatization.

With his inauguration just days away, Bush defended the administration's decision to force the District of Columbia to spend \$12 million of its homeland security budget to provide tighter security for this week's festivities. He also



President Bush greets the crowd Friday at Florida Community College at Jacksonville-South Campus in Jacksonville, Fla., following a conversation on higher education and job training there with Florida officials.

warned that the ceremony could make the city "an attractive target for terrorists."

But it will be Iraq that dominates White House deliberations off stage. Over the next few weeks, Bush will be monitoring closely Iraq's plan to hold elections for a 275-member national assembly. He must deliver his State of the Union address with a message of resolve on Iraq, and he will need to seek congressional approval for roughly \$100 billion in emergency spending, much of it for the war.

In the interview, the president urged Americans to show patience in coming months as Iraq moves slowly toward creating a democratic nation where a brutal dictatorship once stood. But the relentless optimism that dominated Bush's speeches before the U.S. election was sometimes replaced by pragmatism and caution.

"On a complicated matter such as removing a dictator from power and trying to help achieve

democracy, sometimes the unexpected will happen, both good and bad," he said. "If an realistic about how quickly a society that has been dominated by a tyrant can become a democracy... I am more patient than some."

Powell last week said U.S. troops levels could be reduced this year, but Bush said it is premature to judge the number of U.S. men and women who will be needed to defeat the insurgency and plant a new and sustainable government. He also declined to pledge to significantly reduce U.S. troop level before the end of his second term in January 2009.

A new report released last week by U.S. intelligence agencies warned that the war in Iraq has created a new training ground for terrorists. Bush called the report "somewhat speculative" but acknowledged "this could happen. And I agree. If we are not diligent and firm, there will be parts of the world that become pockets for terrorists to find safe haven and to train. And we have a duty to disrupt that."

La. prison journalist freed after 44 years

Man found guilty of manslaughter in '61 death

BY ADAM NOSSITER
The Associated Press

LAKE CHARLES, La. — An award-winning black journalist convicted of murder three times by all-white juries in the 1961 death of a bank teller was set free after a racially mixed jury found him guilty of manslaughter.

Wilbert Rideau, a confessed killer who gained fame for exposures of harsh Louisiana prison life, won his release Saturday after nearly 44 years in state prisons. A manslaughter conviction allows his release for time served.

Seven whites and five blacks deliberated for nearly six hours before reaching an unanimous decision.

Rideau, 62, showed little emotion as the verdict was announced late Saturday night. He left the Calcasieu Correctional Center with his lawyers, making only a few passing comments to reporters.

"I'm still trying to assess it," Rideau said. "It's unreal. It's all so new."

A small but jubilant crowd of supporters cheered Saturday's decision, shouting, "All right, Wilbert!" and "Thank you, Lord!"

On Sunday, Rideau left Lake Charles for Baton Rouge. His supporters were worried for his safety because of the depth of feeling against him in parts of Lake Charles, said Linda LaBranche, a legal researcher who worked with the Rideau Project at Loyola University in New Or-



Wilbert Rideau

leans and now runs Rideau's Web site.

The case has haunted this lakeside city near the Texas line for decades. Rideau's advocates have contended that his years in prison have rehabilitated him.

Rideau was 19 at the time of Julia Ferguson's death. He never denied killing his victim, who was white. His lawyers contended he panicked after a botched bank robbery and stabbed her impulsively amid Louisiana's 1960s-era climate of racial hostility.

Rideau, who escaped death row in the 1970s when the U.S. Supreme Court outlawed then-existing death penalty laws, has had three previous convictions for Ferguson's death. The convictions were overturned on appeal.

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Rescuers find body of one missing in avalanche



Warning signs mark the boundary of The Canyons ski resort outside Park City, Utah. Five people who went beyond the barriers are missing following Friday's avalanche.

The Associated Press

PARK CITY, Utah — Rescuers and trained dogs discovered a body Sunday of one of the five people feared buried by a massive avalanche.

Katie Eldridge, spokeswoman for The Canyons ski resort, near the avalanche, said a news conference was being scheduled to announce the details.

More than 150 rescue workers and trained dogs began scaling Utah's treacherous backcountry at sunrise Sunday to resume the search. The amount of snow forced down the mountain by Friday's slide — up to 30 feet deep at some points — forced authorities to count the potential victims by matching eyewitness accounts of the avalanche to a list of skiers thought to be in the area at the time.

One person was identified as having been consumed by the avalanche: Shane Maixner, 28, of Sandpoint, Idaho, whose friend told a 911 dispatcher that he saw Maixner buried by the slide, Summit County Sheriff Dave Edmunds said.

Rescue workers spent all day Saturday digging through the massive snow pile but found no traces of any of the missing. If Sunday's second sweep of the debris field failed to find anything, authorities planned to bring in machines to take away layers of snow, Edmunds said.

"It's been quite awful now but if anybody can survive Shane can," Maixner's stepmother, Linda Maixner, said Sunday from her home in Bismarck, N.D.

Those feared buried were in an out-of-bounds area near The Canyons resort that had been marked with skull and crossbones warning signs. Adding to the danger were two weeks of wet, heavy snow across the Wasatch mountain range that prompted extreme avalanche warnings across the region, especially in the backcountry.

The danger of more avalanches remained high in the Wasatch Mountains, which received as much as eight feet of wet, heavy snow over the last two weeks.

Volunteers are "risking their lives trying to make a recovery," Edmunds said.

'See Dick and Jane. See Dick and Jane sue': Yiddish version called violation of copyright

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — See Dick and Jane. See Dick and Jane get a lawyer.

Pearson Education, the publishing company that owns the copyright to the single-named stars of countless U.S. reading primers, is suing a division of Time Warner for co-opting the characters in a book called "Yiddish With Dick and Jane," according to The New York Times.

The suit, filed in U.S. District Court in Los Angeles, claims the book violates Pearson's copyright. The book, which has sold more than 100,000 copies since it was published in September by Little, Brown & Company, is billed as a parody.

Not so, the lawsuit says. "Yiddish With Dick and Jane" "is not a parody, but is an unprotected imitation," the suit alleges.

Author Barbara Davilman, who co-wrote the book with Ellis Weiner, told the newspaper that she views the lawsuit as "a good old

shakedown for money." The parody book takes Dick and Jane into adulthood, where they're faced with problems like adultery, aging parents and sexual orientation.

Pearson declined to comment further on the lawsuit, according to the Times. Little, Brown — a part of the Time Warner Book Group — issued a statement defending its product.

The book was "entitled to the full protection of the First Amendment and related laws permitting of social company," the statement said.

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates	
Japanese yen (Jan. 55)	100.00
South Korean won (Jan. 14)	1,011.00
Euro cents (Jan. 14)	1.3572
Dollar buys (Jan. 14)	67.7368
British pound (Jan. 14)	51.59
Commercial rates	
Bahrain (dinar)	0.377
British pound	\$1.8801
Canadian (dollar)	1.202
Denmark (krone)	5.6227
Euro (Euro)	95.49
EUR	\$1.3203/124
Hong Kong (dollar)	7.952
Hungary (forint)	166.12
Iceland (króna)	62.41
Israel (sheqel)	4.360
Japan (yen)	102.45
Kuwait (dinar)	0.2919
Norway (kroner)	6.1832
Philippines (peso)	55.66
Saudi Arabia (riyal)	3.7501
Singapore (dollar)	1.631
South Korea (won)	1,015.90
Switzerland (franc)	1.172
Thailand (baht)	38.85
Taiwan (dollar)	1.4045
(Military exchange rates are those available to customers of military banking facilities in the country of issuance for money. South Korea, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom are purchasing British pounds in Germany. Purchasing British pounds in Germany is provided for by local military banking facilities. Commercial rates are interbank rates for dollars except in Germany, where they are in euros. All figures are foreign in dollars and cents, and the euro, which is dollars-to-euro.)	

PRECIOUS METALS

Gold	New York Merc	\$424.50
Silver		\$6.738

INTEREST RATES

Prime rate	5.25
Discount rate	3.25
Federal funds market rate	3.25
3-month bill	2.34
3-month T-bill	2.34
Source: The Associated Press, Bank of America	

Cents and Sensibility

Money tip of the day

Before tax deadline ...

CBS MarketWatch

NEW YORK — While the April 15 tax deadline is still three months away, there are some tax preparations you should be making now.

So says Tom Ochenschlager, vice president of tax for the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants. He recommends that you make these five preparations before the end of January:

■ **Get organized.** As your relevant tax materials arrive in the mail, "put them all in a single file," he says. Specifically, be on the lookout for W-2, 1099 and 1099B forms.

■ **Make an appointment.** If you plan to have someone else prepare your taxes, now is the time to approach him or her. "It's not unusual for preparers not to take on new clients after the end of this month," says Ochenschlager.

■ **Decide whether you'll take**

the state sales tax or state income tax deduction. Under the American Jobs Creation Act of 2004, taxpayers can choose to deduct either their state and local sales tax, or their state and local income tax. Income tax likely will be the greater of the two; however, you might want to deduct your state and local sales tax if you've recently made one or more major purchases, such as a home, car, or boat.

■ **Check out tax preparation software.** If you'll be preparing your own tax returns, you might invest in tax preparation software such as Intuit's TurboTax or H&R Block's TaxCut. The programs will help you crunch the numbers, and you can deduct the cost of software on your 2005 returns.

■ **Review changes to tax laws.** These include alterations to the tax credits for combat pay. You can read about these changes on the IRS' Web site at www.irs.gov/.



A dental office X-ray reveals a four-inch nail embedded in the skull of Patrick Lawler, 23, which was removed Thursday at Littleton Adventist Hospital in suburban Denver.

Man discovers four-inch nail embedded in skull

BY ERIN GARTNER

The Associated Press

LITTLETON, Colo. — A dentist found the source of the toothache Patrick Lawler was complaining about on the roof of his mouth: a four-inch nail the construction worker had unknowingly embedded in his skull six days earlier.

A nail gun backfired on Lawler, 23, on Jan. 6 while working in Breckenridge, a ski resort town in the central Colorado mountains.

The taxi sent a nail into a piece of wood nearby, but Lawler didn't realize a second nail had shot through his mouth, said his sister, Lisa Metcalfe.

Following the accident, Lawler had what he thought was a minor toothache and blurry vision. On Wednesday, after painkillers and ice didn't ease the pain, he went to a dental office where his wife, Katerina, works.

"We all are friends, so I thought the [dentists] were joking," she said. The doctor came out and said "There's really a nail in

Katerina Lawler said. "Patrick just broke down. I mean, he had been eating ice cream to help the swelling."

He was taken to a suburban Denver hospital, where he underwent a four-hour surgery. The nail had plunged 1½ inches into his brain, barely missing his right eye, Metcalfe said.

"This is the second one we've seen in this hospital where the person was injured by the nail gun and didn't actually realize the nail had been imbedded in their skull," neurosurgeon Sean Markey told KUSA-TV in Denver. "But it's a pretty rare injury."

Lawler was recovering Sunday in the hospital, where he was expected to spend several more days.

Following his lack of medical insurance and hospital bills between \$80,000 and \$100,000, Katerina Lawler said her husband is in good spirits. "The doctors said, 'If you're going to have a nail in the brain, that's the way you want it to be,'" she said. "He's the luckiest guy, ever."

FACES

Love regains custody of daughter

Singer Courtney Love has regained full custody of her 11-year-old daughter, her attorney said.

Love, 40, lost custody of Frances **Bean Cobain**, her daughter with late Nirvana singer **Kurt Cobain**, in 2003 after she overdosed on painkillers in front of the girl. The overdose occurred after Love allegedly broke into the home of her ex-boyfriend, music producer **Jim Barber**.

Her daughter had been staying with Love's stepfather and sister, but Love had daily contact with the girl.

Love regained custody Monday through a judge's ruling, said Love's attorney, **Howard Weltzman**.

Love, former lead singer of the group **Hole**, in a statement released by her attorney said: "Life is about choice, and I've chosen to move forward with my life in a healthy and positive way."



Love

Opinions split on Moore in hometown

Oscar on the shelf or not, **Michael Moore** is not getting much respect at his old high school in **Davison, Mich.**

Despite his fame and many honors, the filmmaker has been rejected all four times that he has been nominated for **Davison High School's Hall of Fame**.

"Would you want him as a role model? Would you want your son or daughter to be like him?" asked **Don Hammond**, a member of the Hall of Fame selection committee. "I wouldn't talk to anybody yet who's for him. The word to describe **Michael Moore** is embarrassing. He embarrasses everybody."

Ryan Eashoo disagrees. The 1997 **Davison High** graduate has spent 80 hours the last two weeks and \$600 of his own money trying to get Moore elected.

"We've been blacklisted," Eashoo, 25, told the **Detroit Free Press**. "I'm a huge **Michael Moore** fan. He's a great producer, great filmmaker, always sticking up for minorities. He's kind of an underdog."

So far, Eashoo has 300 signed nominations of Moore. His goal is 2,000 by Feb. 1. The committee meets Feb. 11 to choose its inductees.

Clarkson honored in Big Easy

Patricia Clarkson, back in her native Louisiana to play a governor's adviser in a remake of the film "All the King's Men," was celebrated like royalty when the mayor designated a day in her honor.

New Orleans Mayor **Ray Nagin**, a former high school classmate of Clarkson, declared Jan. 13 **Patricia Clarkson Day** and held a written proclamation that referred to the actress as "the Queen of Hollywood South."

"It is truly a dream," Clarkson, 45, said Thursday. "I'm shooting an incredibly beautiful film in my beautiful hometown and it's quite overwhelming. Who would have thought, many, many years ago, as I was performing on the O. Perry Walker [High School] stage ... that I would be here today — with a day?"

New Orleans has become a frequent film location in recent years since state lawmakers approved tax credits for the industry. Nagin has sought to build on that by promoting the city as "Hollywood South."

"All the King's Men" also stars **Sean Penn**.

Lords is face of cosmetics ad campaign

Traci Lords is putting her best face forward as the star of **Duprey Cosmetics' 2005** advertising campaign.

"Traci has incredible sex appeal," said **Duprey** co-founder **Brian Duprey**. "Her look can be ethereal, flirty or downright dangerous. She's the ultimate temptress."

Lords, 35, filmed the first commercial in Los Angeles earlier this week in a series of sexy ads featuring the face of the former porn star.

Last year, **Lords** published her autobiography, "Traci Lords: Underneath it All," and appeared as a celebrity judge on IFC's "Ultimate Film Fanatic."



Clarkson

BY COLLEEN LONG

The Associated Press

NEW YORK
Samuel L. Jackson is flippant, brushing off his expansive film career, and cool-guy image.

His casual clothes fit the attitude: black running jacket, jeans, white sneakers and just a hint of bling in a diamond-ringed watch and a dog tag with his initials around his neck. His nearly omnipresent ego is surprising, but with nearly 80 films under his belt, he doesn't really need to care what people think of him. With Jackson's articulate nature, along with a graying mustache and glasses, he could pass for a teacher, maybe one who taught *How to Be Hip* 101.

The 56-year-old actor's latest film, "Coach Carter," is based on the real-life story of **Ken Carter**, a basketball coach in an inner-city high school in **Richmond, Calif.** Carter benched his whole team because some varsity players weren't academically performing up to standards he set in a contract.

Jackson's no fool. He knows his movie isn't going to elicit any big change in how education is generally reviled and athletics revered in schools, but he's OK with it. He's happy as long as a few kids see the film and decide they want to study more, or figure out that an education is something invaluable.

What did you think of Carter when you heard about him?

Jackson: I thought it was a refreshing change from always hearing about winning at any cost. I liked that about what he was doing, putting the idea out there that education is worth something, that it's important. That it will get you somewhere. And when the movie idea came my way, I thought it was socially relevant.

Do you agree with his methods?

Jackson: Sure, in some ways. Somewhere along the way we lost the idea of a "student-athlete." They have become "athlete-students." But winning on the floor is a reward for doing well in the classroom. ...

What do you think about the idea that inner-city kids are set up to fail?

Jackson: That's true. It's the whole idea that if you show up, you pass on. It's also that they need to see there's an upside to being smart, not just being athletic and hip. I don't

think teachers are living up to the standards they should be. They tend to service the kids who pay attention, they don't want to deal with the kids that don't get the grades or that have the problems or that act out. In the city schools, they're also looking out for themselves and their well-being.

I have some teacher friends that wouldn't be too happy to hear you say that.

Jackson: I have teacher friends too, and they are goal-oriented and good at motivating their students,

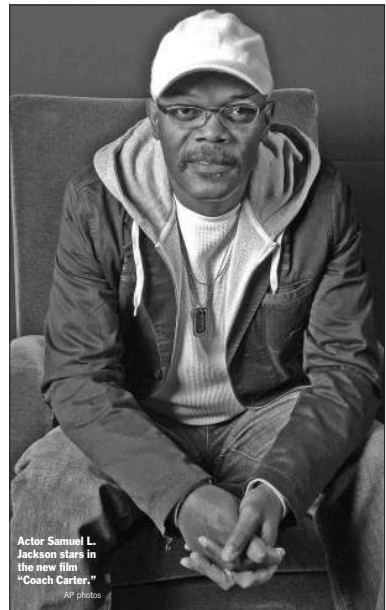
and will work with the kids that need the extra help instead of ignoring them, but I think that's the minority.

Do you feel like you have to be a role model because of your fame?

Jackson: No, I think I need to be a responsible human being, and do things I believe in, and I help out people but I don't do that publicly. It's not my responsibility as an actor to tell you who to vote for, or what cause to believe in or who to give money to. It makes me crazy to hear people in my profession preach about that sort of thing.

Sitting down with 'Coach Cool'

Samuel L. Jackson takes to court in real-life flick



Actor Samuel L. Jackson stars in the new film "Coach Carter."

AP photos

OPINION

A nation full of faith and religious illiterates

BY STEPHEN PROTHERO

The sociologist Peter Berger once remarked that if India is the most religious country in the world and Sweden the least, then the United States is a nation of Indians ruled by Swedes. Not anymore.

With a Jesus lover in the Oval Office and a faith-based party in control of both houses of Congress, the United States is undeniably a nation of believers ruled by the same.

Things are different in Europe, and not just in Sweden. The Dutch are four times less likely than Americans to believe in miracles, hell and biblical inerrancy. The euro does not trust in God. But here is the paradox: Although Americans are far more religious than Europeans, they know far less about religion.

In Europe, religious education is the rule from the elementary grades on. So Austrians, Norwegians and the Irish can tell you about the Seven Deadly Sins or the Five Pillars of Islam. But, according to a 1997 poll, only 1 out of 3 U.S. citizens is able to name the most basic of Christian texts, the four Gospels, and 12 percent think Noah's wife was Joan of Arc. That paints a picture of a nation that believes God speaks in Scripture but that can't be bothered to read what he has to say.

U.S. Catholics, evangelicals and Jews have been lamenting for some time a crisis of religious literacy in their ranks. But the dangers of religious ignorance are by no means confined to those worried about educating their children or cultivating the next generation of clergy.

When Americans debated slavery, almost exclusively on the basis of the Bible, people of all races and classes could follow the debate. They could make sense of its references to the runaway slave in the New Testament book of Philemon and to the year of jubilee, when slaves could be freed, in the Old

Testament book of Leviticus. Today it is a rare American who can engage with any sophistication in biblically informed arguments about gay marriage, abortion or stem cell research.

Since Sept. 11, 2001, President Bush has been telling us that "Islam is a religion of peace," while evangelist Franklin Graham (Billy's son) has insisted otherwise. Who is right? Americans have no way to tell because they know virtually nothing about Islam. Such ignorance imperils our public life, putting citizens in the thrall of talking heads.

How did this happen? How did one of the most religious nations in the world become a nation of religious illiterates? Religious congregations are surely at fault. Churches and synagogues that once inculcated the "fourth R" are now telling the faithful stories "ripped from the headlines" rather than teaching them the Ten Commandments or parsing the Sermon on the Mount (which was delivered, as only 1 in 3 Americans can tell you, by Jesus). But most of the fault lies in our elementary and secondary schools.

In a majority opinion in a 1963 Supreme Court case (Abington vs. Schempp), church-state Justice Tom Clark wrote, "It might well be said that one's education is not complete without a study of comparative religion ... and its relationship to the advance of civilization." If so, the education of nearly every public school student in the nation is woefully inadequate.

Because of misunderstandings about the First Amendment, religious studies are seldom taught in public schools. When they are, instruction typically begins only in high school and with teachers not trained in the subtle distinction between teaching religion (unconstitutional) and teaching about religion (essential).

Though state educational standards no longer ignore religion as they did a decade ago, coverage of religion in history and so-

JUDGING
BY THE
COLOR OF
YOUR SUIT,
I ASSUME
YOU'RE A
RED
STATIST.



cial science textbooks is spotty at best. Charles Haynes, senior scholar at the First Amendment Center in Virginia, said: "It is as if we got freedom of religion in 1791 and then we were free from religion after that."

Now that the religious right has triumphed over the secular left, every politician seems determined to get religion. They're all asking "What Would Jesus Do?" — about the war in Iraq, gay marriage, poverty and Social Security. And though the ACLU may rage, it is not un-American to bring religious reasoning into our public debates. In fact, that has been happening ever since George Washington put his hand on a Bible and swore to uphold the Constitution.

What is un-American is to give those debates over to televangelists of either the sec-

ular or the religious variety, to absent ourselves from the discussion by ignorance.

A few days after Sept. 11, a turbaned Indian-American man was shot and killed in Arizona by a bigot who believed the man's dress marked him as a Muslim. But what killed Balraj Singh Sodhi (who was not a Muslim but a Sikh) was not so much bigotry as ignorance. The moral of his history is not just that we need more tolerance. It is that Americans — of both the religious and the secular variety — need to understand religion. Resolving in 2005 to read for yourself either the Bible or the Quran (or both) might not be a bad place to start.

Stephen Prothero teaches at Boston University and is author of "American Jesus: How the Son of God Became a National Icon." This column first appeared in the Los Angeles Times.

Delaying election would turn back the clock in Iraq

BY KARIM KHUTAR ALMUSAWI

With only a little more than two weeks to go before Jan. 30, there are still some people who want to postpone the Iraqi elections.

For one thing, the Iraqi people are longing for democracy after decades of dictatorship and oppression, and they are not inclined to wait much longer. This was confirmed by a survey conducted by the International Republican Institute in December, showing that 67.4 percent of Iraqis support going forward with the elections as scheduled. According to Iraq's independent election commission, 7,471 candidates — representing 75 political entities, 27 organizations and nine coalitions — plan to participate in the national assembly elections.

Don't be fooled by propagandists: This election process — to create a transitional national assembly that will begin to build durable democratic institutions and draft a constitution — is for the benefit of all. No effort has been made by authorities to stop anyone from participating, so there is no "Sunni crisis" as some people are suggesting.

Simply speaking, the new Iraq will be for all Iraqis and not for any one particular group, faction or religion. It will represent all the Arabs, Kurds, Turkmens and Assyrians, and any other minorities or religions.

No one wants injustice or inequality except the terrorists. That was the old policy under the racist regime of Saddam Hussein — a policy that led to mass graves all over the country — and the terrorists today would like to re-create it.

You have to ask yourself whose interest is served by the call to postpone the elections, despite the intense efforts of the independent electoral commission, despite the support of the main Iraqi parties and institutions, despite the clear desire of friendly nations and the United Nations to have the elections held on time. Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani's representative said on Dec. 31: "The issue of the election in Iraq is a decisive matter for all Iraqis. There is a consensus on holding it. Any attempt to postpone it means causing an unimaginable crisis."

And what is to be gained by putting off the election? The deteriorating security conditions won't vanish within the coming weeks

or months, even after the elections. In fact, holding elections and putting a popular, legitimate, democratic government in place is the best way to help stabilize and secure the country — not the other way around.

Some have suggested calling a "reconciliation convention" before the election is held. But reconciliation has been reached already; the only ones outside the circle are the Baathists. And reconciling with the Baathists is out of the question. It is not only against the interest of the Kurds and Shiites to reconcile with the Baathists, but it is against the interest of most Sunnis as well.

The call by some for a boycott of the elections as long as our nation remains occupied

is also misguided. The reality of the matter is that the multinational forces in Iraq are an absolute necessity for the moment.

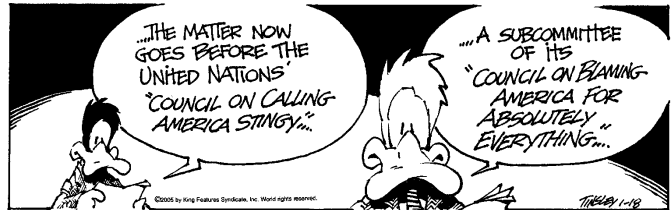
But yes, of course, we will support efforts by the newly elected government to set a schedule for the withdrawal of these forces once they are no longer needed.

Holding the elections is our only choice, and it should be done on schedule. To put them off would be to give in to a terrible clandestine plot that might lead to canceling them forever. This would lead Iraq back to where we were under the former regime.

Karim Khutar Almusawi is the representative in Washington of the Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq, a leading Shiite political party. This column first appeared in the Los Angeles Times.

Mallard Fillmore

BY BRUCE TINSLEY



Dogfight trial

PA PITTSBURGH — A man who mailed pit bull fight videotapes to government investigators is the first person to stand trial under a 1999 federal animal cruelty statute signed by President Clinton.

The lawyer for Robert Stevens, 61, of Pittsboro, Va., doesn't dispute that Stevens sold the tapes, some of which he narrated.

Instead, federal public defender Michael Novaro said during Stevens' trial that his client shouldn't be targeted because the intent of the law was to prevent "wanton cruelty to animals designed to appeal to a prurient interest in sex." Clinton signed the law after complaints about videos in which small animals were pictured being crushed under the feet of women wearing spiked heels.

Gas explosion at mall

IL CHICAGO — A natural gas explosion overturned cars and blasted a hole in a parking lot at a shopping mall on the city's southwest side, authorities said. Ten people were hurt.

The cause of the explosion at the Ford City Mall was unknown, authorities said. Utility crews were on the scene to shut down gas service to the area. Ambulances and other emergency crews also responded.

Three of the injured were taken to the hospital in serious condition, while the others were in fair or good condition, Chicago Fire Department spokeswoman Rosa Escareno said.

Halfway house shooting

MD BALTIMORE — At least one gunman entered a halfway house, shot to death three residents and seriously wounded a fourth man, who escaped by apparently jumping out a window, police said.

Investigators believe one of the victims might have been killed over a debt. The others may have been shot because they were witnesses, police said.

The three men who died in the shootings lived at the home, which serves people recovering from drug or alcohol addiction. Each was shot at least once and was found in a seated position.

The fourth man had a gunshot wound to his back and other injuries. Their identities were not released. Police were still searching for suspects.

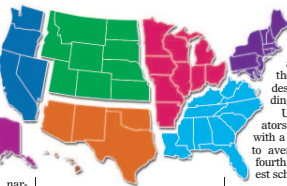
Rebel flags over graves

NC CHARLOTTE — A Confederate battle flag flying over the graves of Civil War soldiers in a city-owned cemetery should be placed in a glass case and flown only on designated days, according to draft recommendations from a city committee.

The group also suggested replacing the battle flag at Elmwood Cemetery with another Confederate flag, such as the N.C. State Flag of 1861.

The Charlotte City Council still must approve the recommendations, but flag supporters oppose what they've heard so far.

"If this is their recommendation,



AMERICAN ROUNDUP

we will fight it," said Mark Alexander Palmer, who has relatives buried at Elmwood. "This flag represents what these men fought and died under. It represents their beliefs. They have the right to have it flow over their headstones."

Drill sergeant sentenced

OK FORT STILL — A drill sergeant was convicted of taking bribes from trainees under his command in which soldiers could buy "insurance" to guarantee they would pass basic training.

Sgt. 1st Class Larry T. Jones, 35, was given a five-year prison sentence following his conviction on nine charges and 18 specifications that included bribery, assault, conspiracy and making false statements to investigators.

Teacher strike possible

MO ST. LOUIS — A union board representing St. Louis teachers voted to reject a district contract proposal, bringing the possibility of a walkout.

The executive board of the St. Louis Teachers and School Related Personnel Union Local 420



Young re-enactor

Adam Botts, 7, of Iman, S.C., plays with **Randon Thomas, 8, of Gaffney, S.C., at Battle of Cowpens 224th Anniversary Celebration.** The fathers of both boys are in the South Carolina Rangers re-enactment group.

voted 10-to-1 against the district's final offer, with one abstention. If union members agree with the board, they will go on strike — despite a state law forbidding a walkout.

Union and district negotiators have been meeting with a federal mediator to try to avert what would be the fourth strike in the state's largest school district since 1973.

Russian mob heist?

NY NEW YORK — A gang of armed robbers from the former Soviet Union took in more than \$1 million from heists including the robbery of a Manhattan jewelry store, according to court documents.

The gang is accused of storming into the store in July, brandishing guns, smashing glass and taking about \$1 million in jewelry, according to an FBI complaint.

FBI agents said they matched DNA from blood left at the scene to a profile of Gidon Abramov, whom they called a ranking Russian Mafia member and leader of the robbers. His car was ticketed near the jewelry store on the day of the robbery, the complaint said.

Abramov was arrested last month. His attorney did not immediately return a phone call seeking comment.

Fewer turkeys raised

WV MORGANTOWN — West Virginia farmers raised 1.1 million fewer turkeys for the dinner table in 2004 than the year before, but the launch of a new interstate cooperative in Hinton, Va., should help stem the decline.

West Virginia growers raised 3.2 million turkeys last year, down 26 percent from 4.3 million in 2003, according to the state Department of Agriculture. The drop was in marked contrast to nationwide production, which was down only 4 percent, from 274 million birds in 2003 to about 264 million last year.

But agriculture spokesman Buddy Davidson said the decline in West Virginia is not a long-term trend, and growers could see gains this year.

Police officer convicted

MI DETROIT — A federal jury convicted a police officer of stealing illegal drugs and distributing them to people who agreed to be shown using them on his commercial Web site, the U.S. Attorney's office said.

The jury convicted Ceire Campbell, 31, of distributing crack cocaine and heroin and conspiracy to distribute them. Both charges carry maximum sentences of 20 years in prison.

Prosecutors said Campbell stole the drugs from Detroit police raids that occurred between June 2002 and May 2003, when a relative of Campbell's notified police.

Agents raided Campbell's home and found drugs and a paraphernalia, a stolen handgun and waivers the drug users signed to permit footage of them to be used on the Internet.

Campbell has been suspended without pay since his arrest. Police spokesman James Tate said Campbell will be removed from the force based on his conviction.



Puddle surfing Tyler Smith skim boards across a puddle at Mississippi State University in Starkville, Miss. Smith, from Long Beach, Miss., is a student at MSU.



Frigid determination Kristie Arend of Louisville, Colo., climbs in the Ouray Ice Park during the first full day of the 10th annual Ouray Ice Festival in Ouray, Colo.



Retro hot dogs Nick Juronville of New Orleans looks over a trio of Doggie Diner heads parked outside an art gallery and wine bar for an exhibit opening in San Francisco. The characters were once the figureheads atop the two dozen Doggie Diner hot dog stands that existed from 1949 to 1986 in the San Francisco Bay area.



Class act St. Thomas School students, front from left, Karl Dockendorf, Madeline Mockler, Amanda Rickie, Marisa Emers and Katlyn Neises take advantage of the gentle snowfall to catch some snowflakes on their tongues in Madison, S.D.



Tax excitement

Drew Batson, of Liberty Tax Service, drums up business outside the company's office in Kansas City, Kan.

Child molester freed

TX DALLAS — A former YMCA camp counselor convicted of molesting 40 children and later castrated voluntarily was set to be freed from jail after a judge threw out the newest indictments against him.

District Judge John Nelms ruled that a prosecutor's delay in moving the charges through the courts harmed the chances of a fair trial for David Wayne Jones, who pleaded guilty in 1991 in exchange for 15 years in prison.

The newest charges involved abuse that allegedly occurred in the early 1990s. Prosecutors brought the charges after the judge dismissed a similar charge, also because prosecutors waited too long to pursue it.

Prosecutors said they will appeal.

Electric cow power

VT MONTPELIER — The 1,500 cows at Blue Spruce Farm in Bridport are producing more than just milk. They're generating electricity.

The methane gas from their manure is being used to produce electricity for Vermont's largest utility.

The manure is heated up and then produces methane gas as it breaks down. The gas is collected and used to power a generator, which sends electricity onto the power grid.

So far about 1,000 customers have signed on to pay about 4 cents more per kilowatt-hour for their electricity to support the farmers. Residential households pay about 12 cents per kilowatt-hour normally.

Fatal car wreck

VA RICHMOND — A car traveling at a high rate of speed hit a tree and broke into two pieces in Chesterfield County, killing all three people inside, police said.

"The force of the impact was phenomenal," Chesterfield Police Capt. Karl Leonard said, adding that the car hit a tree in the median, throwing all three people from the vehicle.

The victims, all from suburban Richmond, were identified by police as Brandon L. Fugett, 22; Paul D. Hines, 23; and Brett K. Jones Jr., 23.

Woman hit by car

NE LINCOLN — A driver clipped a pregnant woman and crashed into a Salvation Army Family Store and Donation Center after her foot slipped off the brake of her car, police say.

The 69-year-old woman's vehicle rammed through the concrete and glass, hitting Carrie Harris, 26, who is 5 months pregnant. Harris was treated for cuts on her elbow and a leg injury.

Student withdraws suit

MO JOPLIN — A student barred from wearing a gay pride-themed T-shirt at his southwest Missouri high school withdrew his federal lawsuit against the Webb City school district.

The controversy involving Brad Mathewson's choice of clothing — including a shirt that said "I'm gay and I'm proud" — deflated with his withdrawal from Webb City High School last month.

"The issue was moot," said Terry Sexton, an attorney for Mathewson.

Mathewson had several confrontations with school officials in the fall. He was suspended Oct. 27 but returned to school Nov. 2 after promising not to wear gay-themed T-shirts until the issue could be resolved.

The school district has said it prohibited the T-shirts because they were disruptive and therefore a violation of school dress code.

School cell phone ban

WA WRENTHAM — Along with chewing gum and notes in class, cell phones have been banned in Wrentham's two elementary schools, adding the town to a growing number of school systems that have cracked down on cell phone use.

Phones in class mainly has been a problem in high schools around the state, which typically ban them in class, but let students carry them in. Wrentham teachers heard cell phones ringing in fifth- and sixth-grade classrooms for the first time before winter break, prompting the ban.

Naked jogger zapped

AR WEST MEMPHIS — For months, officers have been getting reports about a man making late-night runs in the buff. Police said they think they got their mystery jogger.

Fate Patterson, 39, of West Memphis was arrested after he ran past a police car and failed to stop when he was ordered to do so by officers. Police chased him and were able to rein him in by using a Taser.

Patterson was charged with indecent exposure, fleeing and resisting arrest.

Mike Allen, assistant chief of the West Memphis police department, said that it did not initially appear that the man was mentally ill. He did not disclose his reasons for running without his clothes.

What a catch!

AL FLORENCE — Gary Gallien is a house painter. But earlier this week he became a dog catcher — literally.

Working with a crew at an apartment complex in Florence, Gallien caught a small dog as it fell from a fifth-floor balcony.

Gallien said he had stepped outside the building when he heard a woman scream and saw a white, furry object falling toward him. "Somebody hollered and I looked up and just stuck out my arms and caught it," he said. "I caught it like a football. I was fixing to run for a touchdown with it."

Gallien said he did not know where the dog came from, but he took it back to the fifth floor and turned it loose in the hall.

Suicide rates addressed

AK FAIRBANKS — Auditors are recommending that the Statewide Suicide Prevention Council created in 2001 to address Alaska's high suicide rate should continue its work through 2009 instead of ending its work in June. Alaska's suicide rate consistently ranks as one of the highest in the United States. In 2004, there were more than 150 documented suicides in the state, the highest ever.

Stories and photos from wire services



Colorful sunset A solitary windmill stands against a blazing sunrise 50 miles north of Roswell, N.M.

Horoscope

The moon and sun in earth signs encourage reasonable decisions that lead to greater stability both financially and emotionally.

Taurus ruler influence promises that with consistent baby steps will prevail. The goal is still out of reach, but it is a tangible goal, and it doesn't take much imagination to actually feel what it will be like to hold it.

TODAY'S BIRTHDAY

(January 18) Your theme this year is "living and loving in harmony." To reach this goal, you need to get out of the woodwork to help you at precisely the right moment. In February, you acquire new technology that makes life easier, such as a computer or car. Spring is about mentors. Their lessons will stay with you a long time and also be viable! Lucky love signs are Aquarius and Taurus.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). You're not feeling particularly social, so don't even try to fight it. Use the astrological vibes to get in tune with your body. Hit the gym. Put on the Walkman, and vent some of that restless energy on the treadmill.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). Emotional support comes in a feminine package. Reach out to a woman in your family, particularly a grandmother or elderly aunt. She needs your strength as well but may be too proud to admit it.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). You're the clown of the zodiac now, juggling several different projects with ease and never letting anyone see the person behind the greasepaint. Watch for opportunities to delegate. The perfect person for the job is there.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). A difficult situation concerning a man (probably not a family member or someone with whom you have romantic ties) will arise. The best defense is a good offense. The element of surprise is on your side. Keep him off balance.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). The timing is right to begin any sort of spiritual practice, such as tai chi, meditation or yoga. Even if you've been practicing a particular discipline for years, you will benefit from a renewed sense of commitment.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). You are able to convey your thoughts clearly to those you love. Even if the words aren't right, the emotion says it all. Your willingness to communicate even when you feel awkward will create even more love in your life.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Gratitude is one of life's greatest blessings. If something irritates you, thank the universe for giving you this opportunity to better yourself by rising above it. It is impossible to feel sorry for oneself while being grateful.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). As Yogi Berra said, "It's déjà vu all over again." But this time, a flash of insight into your own behavior could suddenly come to you, steering you in a new direction. Your curiosity is your best asset.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). A friend or colleague is stretching his or her wings, experimenting with finding personal power within the group dynamic. Encourage this person. The karmic payoff for you is huge, even if you can't immediately see it.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). The gateways to success are always open. If one door seems inaccessible, go around to the next. Keep trying until you find the one that yields easily to your touch. You more than anyone, know the true value of patience.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). A co-worker or parent figure may make his or her affections known to you. If you feel the same, congratulations — you've made a love connection! If not, an honest discussion will restore the balance.

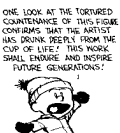
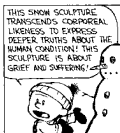
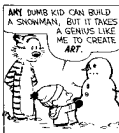
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Snuggle up to your sweetheart. You feel a close emotional bond to your partner, which reassures you you're headed in the right direction. Single fish could find late-night romance at a social gathering near the sea.

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Holiday Mathis



Calvin and Hobbes



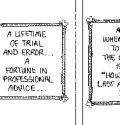
Jump Start



Zits



Cathy



Hi and Lois



Beetle Bailey



Red and Rover



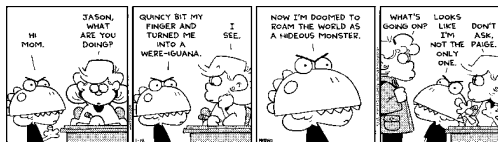
Better or Worse



Peanuts



Foxrot



B.C.



Baby Blues



Spider Man



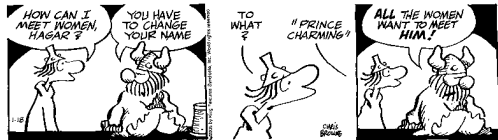
Blondie



Dilbert



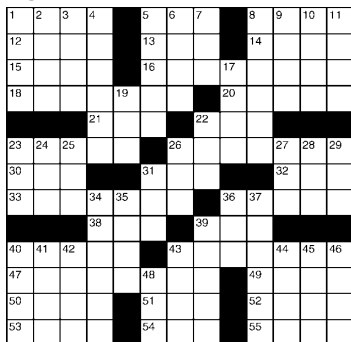
Hagar



Garfield



Eugene Sheffer Crossword



Across

- Solipsist's subject
- Nonclergy
- Rebuff a masher
- Sandbox toy
- Work with
- City in California
- Beige
- Parlor game
- Willy Wonka's heir
- Zoo howler
- Cerise
- Itty-bitty
- Worships
- Plaintiff's claims
- Enthusiast
- Rotation duration
- Demographics datum
- Alyssa Milano series
- Star of many westerns?
- Lubricant
- Turf
- Dieter's entree
- Ben-Hur's ride
- Special appeal
- Between jobs
- Top-notch
- Spot on a domino
- Doctor's income
- Went blond
- Fir feller
- Labels

Down

- Detail, for short
- Apiece
- Turkish money
- Hardly a blizzard
- Intelligible
- Arthur of tennis
- Verily
- Buff, to vampires
- Ore deposit
- Port of Yemen
- Tower city
- Comical Caroline
- "— Miserables"
- Wherefore
- Cpl.'s subordinate
- "Go, team!"
- Literary collection
- Scoundrel
- Wander about
- Early bird?
- Witness
- N.J. neighbor
- Bellowed
- Skirt length
- Feathery accessory
- Unanchored
- Form
- Great amount
- "Hi, sailor!"
- Broadway's Max
- Bialystok
- M minus XCI
- Notion
- Couturier
- Cassini
- Hardy heroine
- Resort

Answer to Previous Puzzle



I-18

CRYPTOQUIP

JTIB D RWICIGQB VDEGDWIR
QP SMBBIE, JQLCS MG OI
D RLEI OIG GTDG TI
VEIPIER EMOR?

Yesterday's Cryptquip: IF YOU PUT A SOFT COVER OVER A SALAD VEGETABLE, I GUESS IT COULD BE A CELERY CAP.

Today's Cryptquip Clue: G equals T

Love can work second time around

Dear Abby: "Divorced but Still in Love" asked if it was possible for a couple who had been divorced to make a go of marriage the second time around. You replied that it is possible, if the couple is willing (with the help of a marriage counselor) to confront the issues that broke them up the first time.

The same thing happened to me and my husband, "John." We were married at 18 and had a child at 21. We were both immature and too young to be married. After our divorce, we still spent time together as a family.

Two years later, I met and married "George." George and I had a child together, but he was not a good husband or father. Several months after I divorced George, John and I rekindled our relationship. We have been together for almost five years,

married for 3½ years and are beautifully happy together. John is a wonderful father to both boys and doesn't play favorites. I know it can work the second time around; our marriage is proof of it.

— **Older and Wiser, Taber City, N.C.**

Dear Abby: Congratulations to you both.

Sometimes people fail to appreciate the value of what they have until it's gone. Read on:

Dear Abby: My

husband and I were married at 19. In the first grade, I would kick him in the shins and then run like the dickens because I "liked" him. My first kiss was from him on my 16th birthday. After four years of separating and getting back together, he said enough is enough and filed for divorce.

Almost a year to the day our

divorce was final, we remarried and have not been sorry. (We had continued to see each other and I became pregnant.) While I don't recommend having a relationship like ours, we have been happy with our decision. Counseling had been a great help, but we were too stubborn to get it even after we remarried. Long story short, we have been through a lot over the years — even almost divorcing again — but we're more in love than ever. With love and faith, we seem to get through it.

— **Still in Love, Whittier, Calif.**

Dear Still in Love: I'm pleased things are working out for the two of you — but the next time you hit a rough patch, please reconsider counseling. It could save you both a lot of wear and tear on the spirit.

Letters for this column — with name and phone number — should be addressed to Dear Abby, P.O. Box 69404, Los Angeles, CA 90069. Readers can write to Abby on the Internet at <http://www.ueexpress.com/dearabby>. Universal Press Syndicate

Dear Abby



JUMBLE

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

HURTT
 □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

LEXIE
 □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

REFIHE
 □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

FRIPOT
 □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

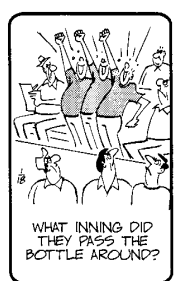
Answer here: □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

Yesterday's

Jumbles: **PIECE MINUS NOUGAT BANISH**

Answer: This can curl your hair at a beauty salon — **GOSSIP**

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME
 By Henri Arnold and Mike Argonin



Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

“□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □”
 (Answers tomorrow)

Friend's lies troublesome, illegal

Dear Annie: I am in a sticky situation with a longtime friend, "Joe," and his wife, "June." June is a pathological liar. She tells big ones and small ones, and her lying has caused some conflicts in their marriage, and now in our friendship with Joe.

June recently skipped out on a big bill she accumulated by saying their child needed an organ transplant. People in the neighborhood are concerned for the family's welfare, and they are rallying around, putting together fruit baskets and raising money. Of course, their child isn't sick at all and never was.

Other than this, Joe and June are great people, and we've had many good times over the years. I don't want June's lying to come between our friendship. Joe has never mentioned his wife's fabrications, and we suspect it hasn't occurred to him that her tall tales get back to us. We hate

seeing him oblivious to what she is doing. We no longer trust her, and it is increasingly uncomfortable to be around her.

Do we tell Joe what we know? Should our children still be able to play with hers?

— **Concerned Friends in Illinois**

Dear Friends: Taking money donated for her child's "transplant" puts June squarely in the criminal-fraud division. She can be arrested.

June needs therapy, and soon. If you are certain of your facts, confront June and tell her she needs help. If she refuses, talk to Joe. Yes, it may damage the friendship, but it sounds as if that's going south anyway, and this is too serious to ignore. As for the children, unless they are following in Mom's footsteps, there is no reason they cannot continue to play with yours.

Annie's Mailbox



Dear Annie: I read with interest the letter from "K.B.," the woman whose dentist and doctor had given up on her problems with temporomandibular joint pain. TMJD is complex, and management includes a comprehensive exam and diagnosis, addressing all possible contributing factors. K.B. should ask her dentist for a referral to a center that specializes in chronic pain or a dental school that does research in TMJD.

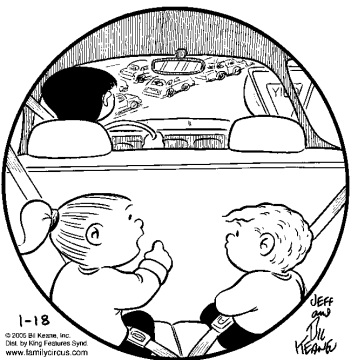
— **Clair E. Collins, D.M.D., University of Colorado School of Dentistry**

Dear Dr. Collins: Thank you for your expert advice. For information on TMJ, we recommend The TMJ Association (tmj.org), P.O. Box 26770, Milwaukee, WI 53226-0770. We heard from hundreds of readers, many of whom had their own suggestions.

Annie's Mailbox is written by Kathy Mitchell and Marcy Sugar, longtime editors of the Ann Landers column. Please e-mail your questions to annie@mailbox.comcast.net, or write to: Annie's Mailbox, c/o Creators Syndicate, 5777 W. Century Blvd., Suite 700, Los Angeles, CA 90045.

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Family Circus



"Don't talk, Jeffy. Mommy needs quiet when she's emerging into traffic."

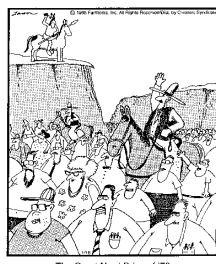


Dennis the Menace



© Gary Larson

The Far Side



Non Sequitur



"...AND WHEN YOU DECIDED TO MAKE SNOOW... THAT WAS A REALLY COOL IDEA!"

The Great Nerd Drive of '76

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Ace helps Maruyama retain Sony lead

BY DOUG FERGUSON
The Associated Press

HONOLULU — Shigeki Maruyama didn't panic when he made a double bogey on the first hole and quickly lost his one-shot lead in the Sony Open. He simply figured he would get it back with a couple of birdies.

Turns out it only took one swing. Maruyama made a hole-in-one on the 202-year-old fourth hole, part of a wild day's winter Waialeale Country Club that kept his large contingent of Japanese fans thoroughly entertained until his 40-foot eagle putt on the 18th hole Saturday stopped on the edge of the cup.

The tap-in birdie gave him a 68, and left him in the same place he started — with a one-shot lead.

"It was a really bad start," Maruyama said. "I tried to think positive things. Fortunately, I had a hole-in-one. That really saved my game. I could think positive after that."

He was at 10-under 200, with plenty of work left.

Brett Quigley saved par after driving into the TV compound and shot a 68, leaving him one shot behind with a great chance to end his 120-stroke on the PGA Tour.

Not many are better prepared. Quigley spent the last month playing golf with his family — including uncle Dana Quigley on the Champions Tour, which means he played every day. He's trying to treat the first full-field event of the year as one of those marathon golf sessions with his uncle.

"We all have a tendency out here [to think], 'Oh my gosh, it's a PGA Tour event. You have to play perfect.' In reality, it's not even close to that," Quigley said. "I haven't attached any meaning to anything. And that's when I play well."

Paul Azinger, the 2000 Sony Open champion, worked his long, penetrating ball flight to perfection in the wind. He was among four players who had a share of the lead at one point, finished with nine straight pars and had 67 to finish two shots behind.

"If it's my time to do it, I'll do it," Az-

inger said. "I haven't gotten ahead of myself yet."

Among those in the large crowd following Maruyama was Isao Aoki, inducted last year into the World Golf Hall of Fame and the last Japanese player to win the Sony Open. Maruyama was 14 when he watched Aoki hole a wedge for eagle on the last hole to beat Jack Renner by one.

"I saw him," Maruyama said. "It gives me great pressure."

He could also get that looking behind him on the leaderboard.

Among the seven players within five shots of the lead was Vijay Singh, the No. 1 player in the world, who quietly surged into contention with a 67.

Singh might have been closer except for taking two shots to get out of a bunker on No. 16, courtesy of a plugged lie, and missing a 6-foot birdie on the last.

For most of the contenders, the first full-field event of the year is ripe with opportunity.

■ Quigley is the only player among the top seven who has never won.

■ Azinger finished No. 126 on the money list last year and does not have full status for the first time since he won Q-school 20 years ago.

Former Masters champion Larry Mizze also has no status, but got a sponsor's exemption to the Sony Open, shot a 64 on Saturday and was at 7-under 203 with Robert Gamez (68).

Charles Howell III also shot a 64 and was another shot behind.

Ernie Els took himself out of contention for a record third straight victory at the Sony Open. He had to rally on the back nine for an even-par 70, leaving him eight shots behind.

Otherwise, the Sony Open got back to normal — all 78 players would make the cut are men, all have driver's licenses.

Fifteen-year-old Michelle Wie showed up at Waialeale, but only to do a television interview with a Japanese network.

"We're on our way to the mall," father B.J. Wie said. "She's meeting friends to go shopping."

The electricity came from Maruyama, who had a large following and kept them in suspense all day.



Shigeki Maruyama celebrates his hole-in-one on the fourth tee during the third round of the Sony Open. Maruyama held a one-stroke lead heading into the final day.

Quigley looked as though he might drop out of the pack. He drove into the trees on No. 3 and had to scramble for bogey, then missed a 3-foot birdie putt on the next hole. But he kept it together.

He surged into the lead with three

straight birdies, all inside 10 feet. Then after dropping a shot on the 15th by missing the green, he drove into the TV compound on No. 16 and saved par with a tough 12-footer to escape in range of his first PGA Tour victory.

STRIPE CLASSIFIED

Pets	820	Pets	820	Pet Accessories	822	Toys	945	Sporting Goods	980	Video	1020
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Kwan ties record with 9th U.S. title

By NANCY ARMOUR
The Associated Press

PORTLAND, Ore. — Michelle Kwan tossed her head back and raised her arms in triumph, a smile as bright as her golden dress spread across her face. She has fretted about being able to win even one title when she was barely a teen. Now 24, she has a remarkable nine, her place in history secure with a run at the U.S. Figure Skating Championships as impressive for its longevity as its dominance.

"It's incredible. Nine!" said Kwan, whose latest crown came Saturday night, tying Maribel Vinson for the all-time record. "I just remember trying to win my first one. To get my ninth... I have no answer for that because I never thought I'd get here."

Now it seems hard to imagine nations without her at the top of the podium.

Kwan earned four more 6.0s, giving her 42 at nationals in the illustrious career that began more than a decade ago when she was too young to wear makeup. Now she's as dominant as ever, with no one in the United States close to challenging her.

Certainly not Sasha Cohen, who again failed to come through when it matters most. Cohen finished second after botching two jumps and was lucky to finish ahead of up-and-comer Kimmie Meissner, who made a bit of history herself with the first triple axel by a U.S. woman since Tonya Harding in 1991.

Meissner had been doing the axel in practice all week and landed a perfect one in warmups, drawing loud applause. When it came time to do the jump for real, she almost seemed to be in slow motion as she took off and then turned 3½ times in the air. A huge smile crossed her face as she lightly touched down, and the crowd roared, knowing they'd just seen something special.

Earlier, Johnny Weir won his second straight men's title. Olympic bronze medalist Tim Goebel was second.

Vinson won nine titles in the 1920s and 1930s, a mark that once seemed unbreakable. Gretchen Merrill, Tenley Albright and Peggy Fleming — they all won multiple titles, but none came close to Vinson.

But it's somehow fitting that Kwan was the one to finally reach the pinnacle. Her former coach, Frank Carroll, trained with Vinson, and Carroll would often tell Kwan stories about Vinson and the lessons she'd taught him.



Michelle Kwan won her ninth U.S. Figure Skating Championships title, tying Maribel Vinson's record.

"There's a cosmic connection between me and Maribel," Kwan said. "She taught Frank and I that there's a lot to be with her something."

Her performance Saturday night may not have been Kwan's best — she was a little tentative and slower than she's been in practice, and she only did five triples. But it was more than worthy of the record books.

Skating to "Bolero," with a program choreographed by none other than Christopher Dean, Kwan was the picture of grace, perfect in sync with the music.

She picked up speed with every jump she did, until she was dancing down the ice on her final footwork. The fans cheered so loudly they drowned out the end of her music, jumping to their feet when she finished. Kwan pumped her fist, shook her head and clapped her hands as if to say, "I did it."

When she saw her 6.0s she beamed. Kwan got seven 6.0s this week, the last major competition where the century-old scoring mark will be used. The International Skating Union has already gone to a points-based system, and U.S. Figure Skating plans to follow suit.

"Sweet!" Kwan said, referring to her 6.0s. "I'm going to be sad when the 6.0 system goes away."

The title was Kwan's eighth straight, extending her own record.

She's also a five-time world champion, and has silver and bronze medals from the Olympics. The only hole in her impressive résumé is Olympic gold, but the 2006 Games are only a year away.

Cohen has yet to win a major title — U.S., world or Olympic — and she won't ever get one if she keeps skating like this. She crashed hard on a triple lutz and had to put a hand down on the ice to keep from falling on her triple loop.

"I'm disappointed not to nail all the jumps, like I've been doing in practice," Cohen said. "It's not in my overall plan to not skate perfectly."

McGrady's late lift enough for Rockets

The Associated Press

HOUSTON — Tracy McGrady scored 28 points and came up with a handful of clutch plays in the Houston Rockets' 73-67 victory over the San Antonio Spurs on Saturday night.

McGrady sparked the Rockets' strong finish by converting a three-point

NBA roundup

play, making a couple of free throws and then finding Bob Sura all alone behind

the arc for a three-pointer that gave Houston a 64-57 lead with 2:49 to go.

He nailed a clinching three-pointer of his own with 34.6 seconds left, putting Houston ahead 69-61. McGrady let his right hand linger in the air a little longer than usual and smiled as the crowd cheered.

Yao Ming added 13 points and Dikembe Mutombo came off the bench for 15 rebounds, helping the Rockets win a season-high fourth straight game and move three games above .500 (20-17) for the first time this season.

They also won consecutive games against San Antonio for the first time since 1997.

Tony Parker led the Spurs with 21 points and six assists, while Tim Duncan had 18 points and 12 rebounds.

The Spurs were held to a season-low point total, going only 44-68 (35 percent) from the floor, including 2-10 (13 percent) from three-point range.

San Antonio's offensive woes certainly weren't helped by the injury of guard Manu Ginobili, who left in the third quarter after bruising his right quadriceps and didn't return. He played only one minute after halftime, then was taken out. Ginobili finished with six points, three rebounds and three steals.

Lakers 104, Warriors 102: Lamar Odom made a driving layup with 1.3 seconds left, and the Lakers won their first game of the season without Kobe Bryant in Oakland.

Los Angeles had 27 points and 12 rebounds, and he drew a charge from Adonal Foyle with 12.6 seconds left to set up his final shot. Odom then got the ball at the top of the key, drove past Cliff Robinson and made a hanging layup to lift the Lakers to their fourth victory in five games.

Chaucky Atkins added 20 points for Los Angeles, which placed Bryant on the injured list before the game with a sprained ankle. He's expected to miss about three weeks.

Derek Fisher had a career-high 29 points against his former teammates. Speedy Claxton had 15, but missed a long jumper at the buzzer.

Timberwolves 92, Trail Blazers 84: In Minneapolis, Latrell Sprewell scored 25 points, including a pair of key three-pointers in the fourth quarter, to lead Minnesota.

Kevin Garnett had 17 points and 10 rebounds, and Eddie Griffin

grabbed a career-high 18 rebounds for the Timberwolves.

The Timberwolves also took advantage of a thinned Portland front-line to gain the edge in the rebound battle 44-32. Missing frontcourt players Zach Randolph, Shareef Abdur-Rahim and Darius Miles due to injury, Portland lost to a four-year second-round loser.

Pistons 99, 76ers 95: Tayshaun Prince's short jumper with 24.5 seconds left put host Detroit ahead and his two free throws sealed the Pistons' fifth straight victory.

Richard Hamilton scored 25 points for the Pistons, who have won 12 of 16 since falling to 5-0 on Dec. 11.

Allen Iverson had 28 points and 13 assists, tying a season high, for the 76ers.

Prince scored 19 points, Ben Wallace had 14 points and 12 rebounds and Billups added 12 points and nine assists.

Kenny Thomas added 16 points and 12 rebounds for Philadelphia.

Magics 85, Pacers 84: In Indianapolis, Hedo Turkoglu had 23 points and Grant Hill added 19 points and eight rebounds as Orlando pulled off a furious finish by the Pacers.

Reggie Miller missed a chance to tie the game from the foul line with 3.3 seconds left, but Jamal Tinsley's desperation heave from halfcourt banked in, but it was ruled he shot after the buzzer.

Jermaine O'Neal had 38 points and 15 rebounds to lead Indiana, which had a two-game winning streak snapped.

Kings 99, Clippers 95: In Sacramento, Calif., Chris Webber led a season-high 36 points and 10 rebounds to lead Sacramento.

Peja Stojakovic made four three-pointers and had 24 points, and Cuttino Mobley scored 13 points in his Kings debut.

Mavericks 98, Nets 93: Dirk Nowitzki scored 26 points, including 16 in the second half after having X-rays on his left ankle, to lead Dallas at home.

Jason Kidd had 10 points, 11 assists and 10 rebounds for New Jersey, the 61st career triple-double for the NBA's active leader.

Hawks 151, Bobcats 95: In Atlanta, Al Harrington scored 22 points, and Antoine Walker added 21 points and 11 rebounds to help the Hawks beat expansion Charlotte.

The Hawks led 88-65 with 8:51 left to play, but had to survive a late scare as the Bobcats cut the lead to single digits in the final minutes.

Grizzlies 101, Bucks 82: Jason Williams had 25 points and eight assists, and the Grizzlies used a team-record 13 three-pointers to beat the Bucks in Memphis.

Cavaliers 84, Jazz 71: LeBron James scored 10 of his 27 points in the fourth quarter and the visiting Cavaliers rallied from a 19-point deficit to beat Jazz.

The Cavaliers held former teammate Carlos Boozer to just three points in the second half.

Bosh, Raptors hold off Hornets down stretch

The Associated Press

TORONTO — Chris Bosh had 24 points, 10 rebounds and two key blocks down the stretch, leading the Toronto Raptors past the New Orleans Hornets 102-99 on Sunday.

New Orleans point guard Baron Davis left late in the third quarter with a bruised right ankle and did not return.

Lee Nailon scored a career-high 32 points for the Hornets but missed two shots and

had two blocked by Bosh in the final three minutes.

Morris Peterson had 25 points and 10 rebounds for Raptors, who are 7-7 since trading Vince Carter to New Jersey on Dec. 17. Aaron Rose added 19 points off the bench, and Bosh finished with his seventh straight double-double.

Nailon attempted a driving layup with less than two minutes left, but Bosh blocked it and Rose ran down the floor and made a fast-break layup to cut New Orleans' lead to one.

Rafael Alston's two free throws with 1:15 left gave Toronto its first lead since the second quarter.

Nailon then appeared open for a short jumper, but Bosh blocked his attempt with less than a minute left. Alston followed with a driving layup, giving Toronto a 99-95 lead with 13 seconds left.

P.J. Brown made one of two free throws to cut the lead to two with 11 seconds remaining, but Rose made two to make it 100-96.

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NBA scoreboard

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division			
Team	W	L	Pct
New York	17	17	.500
Boston	17	17	.500
Philadelphia	16	18	.469
Washington	16	18	.469
New Jersey	12	24	.333

Southeast Division			
Team	W	L	Pct
Miami	28	11	.718
Orlando	20	19	.513
Atlanta	17	22	.438

Central Division			
Team	W	L	Pct
Cleveland	22	13	.629
San Antonio	20	15	.571
Indiana	18	17	.514
Chicago	16	19	.457
Memphis	12	23	.344

Western Conference			
Team	W	L	Pct
San Antonio	20	9	.690
Phoenix	19	10	.655
Houston	17	14	.550
San Antonio	17	14	.550
New Orleans	9	13	.232

Northwest Division			
Team	W	L	Pct
Seattle	26	9	.743
Minnesota	17	12	.588
Utah	17	11	.607
Denver	13	16	.446

Pacific Division			
Team	W	L	Pct
Phoenix	7	8	.469
Sacramento	24	11	.686
LA Clippers	18	10	.643

Saturday's games			
Chicago 86, New York 81			
Atlanta 103, Charlotte 95			
Washington 106, Philadelphia 93			
Detroit 90, Milwaukee 82			
Orlando 85, Indiana 84			
Portland 82, Houston 73			
San Antonio 67, Dallas 56			
Cleveland 84, Utah 71			

Sunday's games			
LA Lakers 104, LA Clippers 95			
San Antonio 102, New Orleans 99			
Toronto 102, New Orleans 99			

Monday's games			
Chicago at New York			
Atlanta at Charlotte			
Orlando at Milwaukee			
New Orleans at Philadelphia			
LA Lakers at Detroit			
Sacramento at LA Clippers			
LA Lakers at Memphis			
Toronto at Minnesota			

Tuesday's games			
LA Lakers at Golden State			
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Wednesday's games			
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69-40. Fouled out—None. Rebounds—Phoebus 15, Martin 15, Washington 17 (Hughes 13), Assists—Phoebus 14, Anderson 10, Richardson 4, Washington 18 (Arnold 7), Total fouls—Washington 18, Phoenix 15, Technical fouls—Richardson, Washington. Defensive Three Second, Hayward, Hughes. A-34.72 (02.04).

Pistons 99, 76ers 95

PHILADELPHIA—In a 4-2-2-1-2-10, Philadelphia 99, 76ers 95. 14-24, Sammons 2-10-0, Vernon 9-7-12, Ben Simmons 9-0-0, Korver 3-6-11, Williamson 4-6-2-2, 10. 2-11 (Hamilton 2), Total fouls—Pistons 20, 76ers 25. 3-13 (02.05).

DETROIT—Prince 6-7-7-19, R. Wallace 4-8-2-14, Hamilton 10-17-3-24, Billups 4-9-3-12, Hunter 4-6-2-2, McVey 5-9-0-10, Dugan 6-1-0-0, Givens 4-6-0-0, 2-10 (02.05). Total fouls—Pistons 20, 76ers 25. 3-13 (02.05).

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DETROIT—Prince 6-7-

Stoudamire saves No. 17 Arizona

By BOB BAUM
The Associated Press

TUCSON, Ariz. — Salim Stoudamire felt himself going into one of his infamous mental funks again under UCLA, but talked himself out of it. What followed was one of the greatest shooting performance of the college basketball season.

Stoudamire capped a 24-point second half with a three-pointer with 2.5 seconds left to give No. 17 Arizona a 76-73 victory over UCLA on Saturday, snapping the Bruins' four-game Pac-10 winning streak.

"I was upset in the first half and it affected my game," Stoudamire said. "In the beginning of the second half, the coach took me out. I sat and thought about many instances where this had happened. ... I just told myself, 'You've got to pick it up from this point.' And I did."

The left-handed senior, who entered the game as the No. 2 three-point shooter in the country at 56.2 percent, finished with 32 points. He scored 24 of the Wildcats' final 29 points.

"He is the best shooter in the country, hands down," Arizona coach Lute Olson said. "They talk about the guy at Duke [J.J. Redick], but I will put Salim up against him anytime."

Stoudamire, who scored 34 points the last time he played UCLA, is the cousin of Damon Stoudamire, who set a franchise record with 54 points for the Portland Trail Blazers on Friday night.

"I watched the game, actually," Stoudamire said. "That definitely inspired me."

After Stoudamire's three-pointer from the top of the key put the Wildcats up, Arizona's Hassan Adams stole a UCLA pass and was fouled. Arizona was called for a technical foul, though, when two players rushed the court in celebration with 1.2 seconds left.

"We have to work on telling our freshmen to not go on the floor until the game is over," Olson said.

However, Jordan Farmer of UCLA missed his free throws, then Adams missed his two, and the game ended before the Bruins could get off another shot.

Stoudamire was 9-for-11 from the field in the second half, most of the shots mid-range jumpers, and was 11-for-16 for the game. He also made all six of his free throws.

Channing Frye added 15 points for the Wildcats (14-3, 4-1), all in the first half. Ivan Radenovic scored eight points and grabbed a career-high 14 rebounds for Arizona.

Dijon Thompson led UCLA with 27 points on 10-for-16 shooting and had 10 rebounds. Farmer added 15 points and Arron Affalo had 13 for the Bruins (10-4, 4-2), who shot 61 percent (17-for-28) in the first half but just 27 percent (8-for-30) in the second.

"They stepped up their intensity, and we just missed shots," Farmer said. "We had a lot of good looks that we missed, but a lot of credit to them, they played hard in the second half."

The Bruins committed 23 turnovers in

losing at McKale Center for the eighth consecutive season.

"Stoudamire was so hot they were just playing to him," UCLA coach Ben Howland said, "getting him shots and he was making them. He was very, very good."

Stoudamire scored 17 of his team's 18 points in a 9½-minute stretch in the second half, while the Bruins went 9-16 without a field goal, missing 11 consecutive shots.

He scored the first 12 points in a 15-3 run that put Arizona up 68-61 on Adams' third and three-point play with 4:04 to go.

Frye's goaltending on Thompson's short jumper ended UCLA's field goal drought and triggered a 7-0 spurt that tied it at 68 when Thompson made two free throws with 1:38 to go. Stoudamire sank two free throws to give Arizona a 70-68 lead with 1:28 left, and two more with 50 seconds remaining to put the Wildcats ahead 72-68.

Mustafa Shakur made one of two free throws to make it 73-68 with 40 seconds left.

But Thompson made a 10-footer, then Adams threw the ball away against UCLA's press and Affalo hit a three-pointer from the corner to tie it at 73 with 16 seconds to play.

Stoudamire calmly dribbled the ball up court, then let fly far beyond the three-point line for the game-winner.

Freshman Arron Affalo acknowledged he gave Stoudamire too much room. But Affalo had seen Stoudamire dribble past him for pull-up jumpers, and got fouled going to the hoop.



Arizona's Salim Stoudamire center is grabbed and congratulated by his teammates Channing Frye (45) and Mustafa Shakur (15) for making a three-point shot in the closing moments to beat UCLA.

"I just didn't want to foul," Affalo said. "He was about 30-plus feet left. I figured he would at least, with 6 seconds left, penetrate and maybe pull up then. I didn't think he would walk and shoot from the volleyball line or wherever he shot it from."

UCLA led most of the game but never by more than eight points.

Wisconsin upsets No. 15 Spartans to extend streak

The Associated Press

MADISON, Wis. — Kam Taylor led the 80-second basket with 37.3 seconds left and Wisconsin ran off the final 11 points to beat No. 15 Michigan State 62-59 Sunday, extending the longest home winning streak in Division I to 38 games.

The Badgers (12-3, 3-1 Big Ten) trailed by eight points with less than 2 minutes left, and Taylor's basket in the lane gave them a 60-59 lead. Zach Morley added two free throws with 9.3 seconds to go, and Michigan State's Shannon Brown missed a three-pointer in the closing seconds.

Clayton Hanson scored 15

points and Sharif Chambliss added 14 to help Wisconsin coach Bo Ryan improve to 6-0 against Michigan State coach Tom Izzo. Mike Wilkinson added 12 for the Badgers, including four in the closing run.

Paul Davis scored 20 points to lead the Spartans (10-3, 2-1), who used a 9-0 run to take a 59-51 lead with 2:49 left. But Chambliss hit a three-pointer and Wilkinson followed with four free throws to help the Badgers pull within 59-58 with 1:41 left.

After Michigan State failed to extend its lead, Taylor hit his runner to give Wisconsin the lead for good. Brown got a good look at the basket with time winding down, but his three-point attempt circled the rim before missing as the buzzer sounded.

Wisconsin is 26-0 in Big Ten

home games under Ryan. The Badgers handed their first loss to Michigan State since Dec. 27, 2001, when the Spartans won 51-47 at the Kohl Center. Four of the games during the Badgers' six-game winning streak over the Spartans have been decided by four points or less.

The Badgers haven't lost at Kohl Center since Dec. 4, 2002, when Wake Forest beat them 90-80.

No. 13 Boston College 73, West Virginia 53: Jared Dudley scored 21 points, Craig Smith added 20 and Boston College got its eighth straight road win.

The Eagles (14-0, 3-0 Big East), one of four unbeaten teams in Division I-A, extended the best start in school history and won their first three conference games for

the first time under eighth-year coach Al Skinner.

Jermaine Watson came off the bench to add 13 points for Boston College. The Eagles, No. 1 Illinois, No. 3 Kansas and No. 5 Duke are the only undefeated teams in Division I-A.

Mike Gerson scored 14 points and Tyrone Sallee had 13 for West Virginia (11-3, 1-2), which has lost three of four games after starting the season 10-0.

In each loss, the Mountaineers were held below 21 percent from beyond the three-point line. They were just 3-for-23 on three-point attempts Sunday.

BC's 14-game winning streak is the school's longest since a 19-game run during the 1968-69 season.

In Saturday's games:

No. 1 Illinois 78, Northwestern 66: At Evanston, Ill., Luther Head scored a season-high 26 points and the Illini improved to 18-0 — the best start in school history.

Roger Powell scored 15 points and Dee Brown had 12 for Illinois, which is 4-0 in the conference and has won 14 straight Big Ten games.

Leading scorer Vedran Vukucic, held to just two free throws in the first half, led Northwestern with 20 points, while Davor Duvancic added 13. The Wildcats (8-8, 1-3) shot 57 percent from the field.

No. 2 Kansas 76, Colorado 61: Wayne Simien had 23 points and 17 rebounds and Keith Langford added 14 points, including a handful of big shots, to keep the

visiting Jayhawks unbeaten. Playing with a soft cast on his broken left thumb, Simien was a force underneath, and his solid play helped the Jayhawks (13-0, 3-0 Big 12) to a 17-point lead in the first half.

Chris Copeland had 22 points and 11 rebounds for the Buffaloes (8-6, 0-3), who had chances to tie in the second half but lost for the 31st time in the last 32 games of this series.

No. 14 Washington 108, Oregon St. 83: At Seattle, The Smons matched a career high with 26 points, going 6-of-7 from three-point range, and Jamaal Williams added a career-high 24 points for Washington.

Beavers coach Jay John left the arena in an ambulance at half-time after complaining of chest pains and shortness of breath. The 46-year-old coach was examined by an on-site doctor before paramedics were called.

No. 16 Gonzaga 86, Pepperdine 62: At Spokane, Wash., Adam Morrison scored 26 points, and Ronny Turiaf added 19 points and 10 rebounds, his fifth double-double of the season, for Gonzaga.

Gonzaga (13-3, 3-1 WCC) has won six in a row against Pepperdine. Glen McGowan scored 15 points for Pepperdine (12-7, 2-2).

No. 22 Marquette 66, South Florida 64: Todd Townsend's three-point play with 5 seconds to play lifted host Marquette. Travis Diener led Marquette (14-2, 2-1 Conference USA) with 24 points, and Townsend finished with 20. Terrance Leather led USF (8-6, 1-2) with 25 points.

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Eagles: Philadelphia looks far from rusty

EAGLES, FROM BACK PAGE

The Eagles (14-3) were in sync even though most starters barely played for nearly a month, and they didn't lack for big-play offense or defense.

"I guess we weren't too rusty," Donovan McNabb said after going 21-for-33 for 286 yards.

The Eagles got plenty of help from the Vikings (9-9), who showed exactly how they lost seven of their last 10 regular-season games to back into the playoffs. Minnesota's high-powered offense couldn't handle defensive end Devon Kearse and Trotter.

The inert Vikings didn't exactly prove a test, but Michael Vick and the Falcons scored a more formidable hurdle.

"Mistakes, penalties at the wrong time, taking some points off the board, stopping a drive, having a nice play called back," said Vikings coach Mike Tice, rattling off Minnesota's miscues. "We made some mistakes when we had a little bit of rhythm going. We didn't finish anything."

While Philadelphia was getting two touchdowns from Mitchell — and one takeoff of Randy Moss' simulated mooning as Mitchell pretended to pull up his pants after his first score — it also benefited greatly from Vikings errors:

■ An offensive lineman remaining on the field instead of Moss for a fake field goal, leaving no receivers to catch Gus Frerotte's pass.

■ Several costly defensive penalties, including three pass interference calls totaling 78 yards.

■ Two damaging interceptions thrown by Daunte Culpepper, who had 39 TD passes and only 11 picks during the season.

Mitchell got lucky on his second TD, catching a fumble by tight end L.J. Smith in the end zone.

"I want to say 'Hi' to all my new friends out there, those people who doubted me and the receivers," added Mitchell, who finished with five catches for 65 yards, each one a key play.

For coach Andy Reid, the Eagles never have lost after a bye, and the regulars basically had three weeks of nonaction. It didn't hurt, and Philly led 14-0 44 seconds into the second quarter.

Mitchell caught a 2-yard pass

from McNabb midway in the opening period, then did his reverse moon. Greg Lewis' graceful catch of a 52-yard throw set up Brian Westbrook's 7-yard TD reception. Westbrook's first postseason score; he was injured for last year's playoffs.

Moss, who was fined \$10,000 by the NFL for his simulated mooning of the Green Bay crowd last weekend, was held to three catches for 51 yards. Culpepper was sacked three times and befuddled nearly the entire game.

"You try to play mistake-free football," Culpepper said. "But when you do make mistakes, you get to do something to compensate for it."

The Vikings gained more on one second-quarter play, a 40-yard pass to Marcus Robinson, than they managed in total before that. It sparked a drive that culminated in Culpepper's 7-yard scramble to make it 14-7. But Minnesota immediately messed up again. J.R. Reed returned the kickoff to the Vikings' 46, then Minnesota was hit for two pass interference calls. From the 14, McNabb found Smith over the middle, and Smith fumbled at the 4 when hit by Antoine Winfield.

The ball shot directly to Mitchell, who caught it in the end zone for his second score.

"That just goes to show you things are going our way," McNabb said.

Only Mitchell's fourth-and-26 reception in the playoffs against Green Bay last January was more meaningful. That catch pretty much got the Eagles to the NFC title game, where they lost to Carolina.

Mitchell didn't mock Moss this time, and Moss caught his first pass on the Vikings' next offensive play, a 15-yarder. That sparked a drive to the Philadelphia 3, where Minnesota botched the fake field goal with Tice and his staff screaming for a timeout they didn't get.

The Vikings damaged themselves again moments later. Chris Chalkers recovered J.R. Reed's fumble at the Philadelphia 41, but he had stepped out of bounds and only got one foot back in when he picked up the ball. Philadelphia won a replay challenge, but didn't score on the drive.

It didn't take long for those fresh legs to pay off, especially when matched against the Rams' woeful defense and special teams.

"I don't think I've been part of a loss like this," defensive end Bryce Fisher said. "We played like we had handcuffs on."

Vick's big run came on Atlanta's third offensive play, setting up an 18-yard touchdown pass to Alge Crumpler just three minutes into the game.

The tone was set for the first half. It resembled a track meet more than a football game. The



ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH/AP

Atlanta Falcons' Allen Rossum, center, returns a punt 68 yards for a touchdown in the second quarter against the St. Louis Rams on Saturday. Rossum set an NFL record with 152 yards on three punt returns.

Falcons: Rams run out of gas

FALCONS, FROM BACK PAGE

"You saw a team that plays together," rookie coach Jim Mora said. "You saw a team that's pretty complete. We like to say in the locker room that the best player on our team is our team. We proved that tonight with the way we played."

The Falcons advanced to the NFC championship game for just the second time in the franchise's 39-year history. They will travel to Philadelphia next weekend for a spot in the Super Bowl.

The other time Atlanta made it this far was the 1998 season. The "Dirty Birds" got all the way to the Super Bowl, only to get blown out by Denver in John Elway's final game.

Now, a team known mostly for its inept play is on the verge of making it to Jacksonville, Fla., with a first-year coach. And speaking of Mora, he finally gave his family a playoff victory.

His dad, Jim Mora, took New Orleans and Indianapolis to the playoffs six times, only to go one-and-out each time. He's the only 100-win coach in NFL history without one postseason victory on his résumé.

Well, his son has a 1-0 record in the playoffs — and his dad, who was at the Georgia Dome, must have been pretty proud.

St. Louis won its last two regular-season games just to make the playoffs with an 8-8 mark, then knocked off NFC West champion Seattle last weekend. But the Rams ran out of gas against the Falcons, who were off last week and had not played a meaningful game in almost a month.

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AP

Atlanta Falcons tight end Alge Crumpler (83) scores on an 18-yard reception under pressure from St. Louis Rams safety Antuan Edwards (42) and safety Adam Archuleta (31) during the first half Saturday.

Falcons led 28-17, the teams combining on the second-highest scoring half for a divisional-round game in league history.

Rossum did more running than anyone. The 5-foot-8 turn specialist returned a punt 68 yards for a touchdown with less than a minute to go in the first half.

He wasn't done, setting an NFL playoff record with 152 yards on three punt returns — a staggering 50.7-yard average.

"I truly let it all out on the field," Rossum said. "I'll have no trouble going to sleep tonight."

He had returns of 39 and 45 yards in the third quarter, setting up Vick's 6-yard touchdown pass to Peerless Price and Jay Feely's 38-yard field goal for a comfortable 38-17 lead.

Rossum broke the mark set by Minnesota's Anthony Carter, who had 143 yards in punt returns against the Saints during the 1987 season. In a fitting bit of symmetry, that was the first playoff loss for Mora's father.

Dunn rushed for 142 yards on just 17 carries, including the 62-yard touchdown that quickly eclipsed Vick's scamper for the longest run in Falcons' playoff his-

tory. By the time Dunn was done, he had eclipsed Jamal Anderson's franchise record of 113 yards in a playoff game.

The Falcons looked every bit like the league's top running team, finishing with 327 of their 397 yards on the ground — one of the greatest rushing games in playoff history.

Vick passed for only 82 yards but was an efficient 12-for-16.

"This is a very exciting time for us," he said. "The whole world is watching. This is something we've worked for all year. Why not go out there and enjoy the moment?"

Vick's only blemish was a fumble at the end of a run, and the Rams' defense had nothing to do with it. He simply lost the ball after stumbling to the turf without being touched.

Otherwise, Vick loomed large — even when he didn't have the ball. The Rams assigned a linebacker or defensive back to keep an eye on him, but that created some huge holes for the running backs.

"They tried to play us in a certain defense and we were kind of expecting it," Vick said. "It backfired on them."



Minnesota Vikings wide receiver Randy Moss was never a factor on Sunday, as the Eagles held him to three receptions for 51 yards.

SPORTS



Reserve guard Dixon scores 11
in fourth quarter as Wizards
win seventh straight, Page 28

Eagles, Falcons set up NFC final

Well-rested
Philadelphia
outclasses
Minnesota

BY BARRY WILNER

The Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — Freddie Mitchell showed 'em why he's called "Hollywood."

In the Eagles' first meaningful game in nearly a month, the back-ups played like regulars and the supporting cast picked up the slack. Philadelphia wasn't rusty at all in making its fourth straight NFC championship game with a 27-14 romp Sunday over the self-destructing Minnesota Vikings.

Mitchell was the headline. He more than filled in for All-Pro wide receiver and glamour guy Terrell Owens, who watched from a luxury box while nursing an injured ankle. He scored two touchdowns, and wasn't a bit shy about congratulating himself for playing the part of team celebrity.

"I'm a special player," he said, wearing an Indiana Jones hat and bow tie. "I've just got to thank my hands for being so great. I've just been chillin' being patient, being humble. I knew my time was going to come."

The bigger question: Was the Eagles' Super Bowl time finally come?

Philadelphia, which has lost three consecutive conference title games, the last two at home, hosts Atlanta next Sunday. The angst level this week in Philly will be off the scale as the Eagles attempt to get to their first Super Bowl in 24 years.

It's the first time a team has hosted three straight conference championships.

"We know what's at stake, we're a better team now," linebacker Jeremiah Trotter said. "This is our year."

In the weak NFC, it just might be.

SEE EAGLES ON PAGE 31



Philadelphia Eagles' Greg Lewis catches a 52-yard pass from Donovan McNabb in front of the Vikings' Brian Williams during the first quarter of their NFL divisional playoff game on Sunday in Philadelphia. The Eagles won 27-14 to advance to the NFC championship game for the fourth consecutive season.

Atlanta runs
roughshod
over St. Louis

BY PAUL NEWBERRY

The Associated Press

ATLANTA — Michael Vick rolled to the left, brushed aside a rusher like a pesky gnat and took off the other way.

He didn't stop until 47 yards later.

The Atlanta Falcons were off and running — and their one-of-a-kind quarterback had plenty of teammates along for the ride.

Warrick Dunn ran for a 62-yard touchdown, Allen Rossum set an NFL playoff record for punt returns and the Falcons routed the St. Louis Rams 47-17 Saturday night.

Vick? He was right in the middle of things, of course, throwing two touchdown passes and running for 119 yards to break Donovan McNabb's year-old record for rushing yards by a quarterback in a playoff game.

But Vick's teammates managed to escape his considerable shadow, putting Atlanta within one win of the Super Bowl.

SEE FALCONS ON PAGE 31



Atlanta Falcons QB Michael Vick threw two touchdown passes and rushed for a record 119 yards in Saturday's 47-17 victory over the St. Louis Rams in Atlanta.

Kwan ties record
with her ninth title
in U.S. Figure
Skating
Championships

Page 27

Steelers pull out
OT win over Jets

Page 30

Wisconsin upsets
Michigan State,
extends home
win streak to 38

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